Posters for Your Room ★ 3 Summertime Quizzes

July/August 2016

American Girl™

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- Homemade soda recipes
- **Styling tips** for your bedroom

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Volume 24, Number 4

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Plus AG's flower power poster!

Cover photo: Steven Talley

Safety first!
Some of our projects and activities require an adult's help.
When you see this symbol, be sure to ask an adult to work with you.

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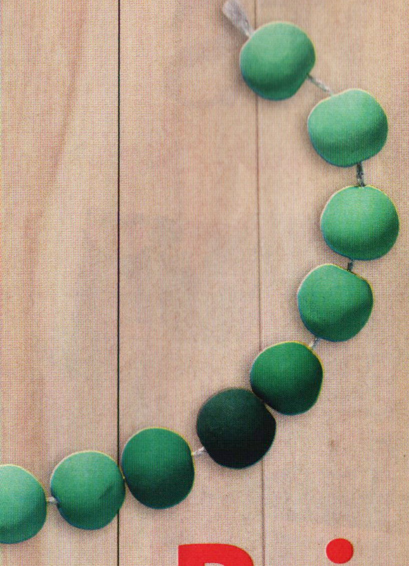
Girls EXPRESS™

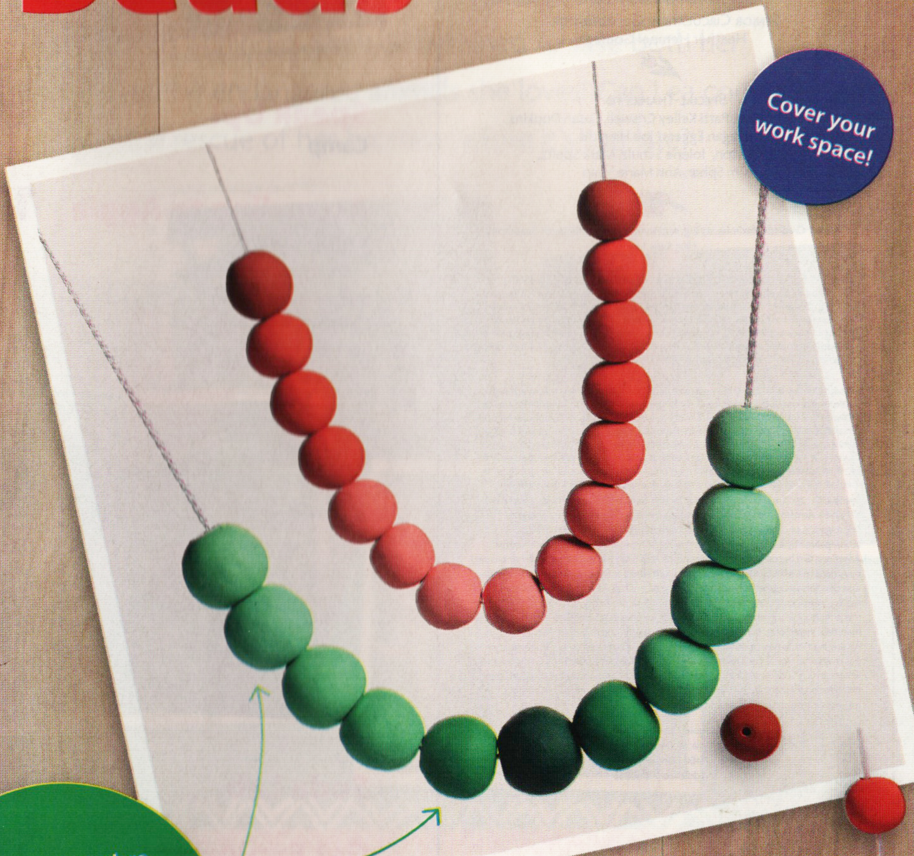


Bright Beads

Make a cute clay necklace.

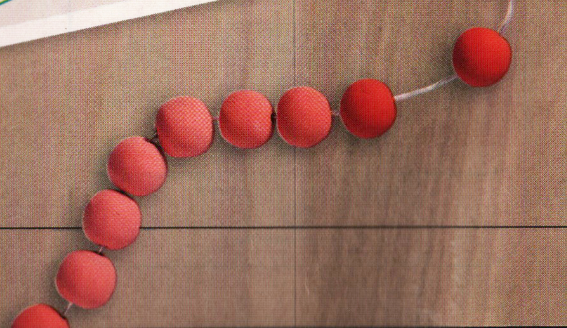
Cut a piece of nylon cord. Fasten kid-safe plastic jewelry hooks to each end after adding clay beads. (Look for the hooks in the kids' jewelry section of craft stores.)

To make the beads: Use nontoxic, kid-safe oven-bake clay. Use a plastic knife or clay tool to cut same-size pieces of clay (start with the size of a marble and make the pieces bigger or smaller depending on the style you'd like). Roll the pieces into round balls, and let them sit for a few minutes so they become more firm. Use a toothpick or wooden dowel to poke a hole through each clay ball. Ask a parent to bake the clay beads according to the package instructions.



Cover your work space!

To make an ombre bead necklace, add a small bit of **black** clay to make the bead darker or a small bit of **white** clay to make the bead lighter.

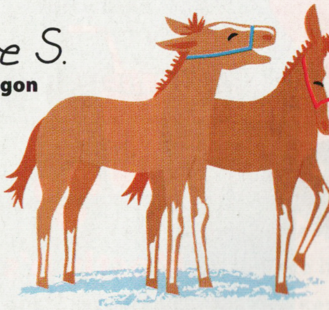


Styling: Melissa Seymour

Meet a Pet!

Grace's horse had twin foals.

Grace S.
Age 8, Oregon



What are your pets' names?
My twin foals' names are Annabel and Oliver.

How did you name your pets?
Since we weren't expecting our mare, Sephira, to deliver twins, we had to quickly think of a filly and a colt name that would go together. Annabel and Oliver just sounded nice together.

Do you celebrate your pets' birthday?
We are planning a big birthday celebration for the twins when they turn one.

Describe a time your pets were naughty.
Sometimes Annabel and Oliver are not good listeners when they first get into the arena because they have to get their wiggles out.

A time your pets made you laugh:
When the twins were three months old, my mom put a small video camera on them and watched them play in the pasture. It's funny to see what the world looks like from their perspective.

Do your pets know any tricks?
I work with my horses on enrichment activities and ground training, like walking over pole obstacles, carrying hula hoops around their necks, and popping bubbles with their noses. This will help them to not get spooked easily when they are ready to be saddle-trained.

If you could hear what your pets were thinking, what would it be?
"I wonder if Grace brought carrots to the barn for me this time."

Tell us about your pets' favorite spot in your home.
My twin foals live in a beautiful barn at a farm down the road from us. They mostly love to be in the pasture eating grass all day.

How would you describe your pets in three words?
Awesome. Sweet. Smart.

How do you show your pets that you love them?
I love to give Annabel and Oliver lots of kisses and cuddles.

Annabel and me

This is my little sister Sofie with Oliver.

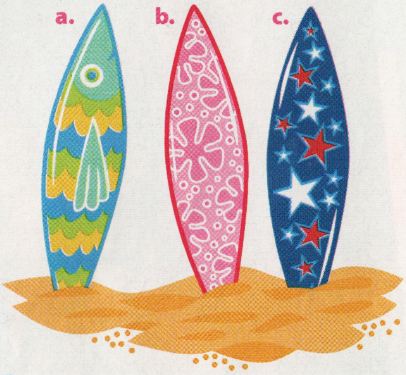
Photos: Yah Yah Photography

Stop and Shop

Which boardwalk store are you?

1. What's your favorite thing about summer?
- **a.** You get to spend lots of time with friends.
- **b.** There's more time to chill out.
- **c.** There's a lot more to do outside!

2. Which surfboard would you choose?



3. You're invited to play beach volleyball. How do you respond?
- **a.** "I'm in, but I'm going to wait until my friend comes."
- **b.** "Thanks for the invite, but I'm going to lounge in the sun."
- **c.** "Race you to the net!"

Mini Quiz
Girl Power

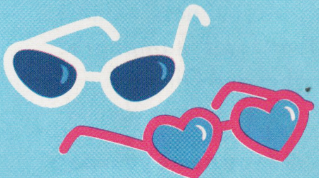
4. What can be found in your swim bag?
- **a.** A funny graphic novel.
- **b.** An MP3 player
- **c.** Snorkel gear

5. What do you like to read at the beach?
- **a.** A hilarious story about two best friends
- **b.** An amazing story about a lost dog that finds its way home
- **c.** A true story about a girl who went to the Olympics

Answers

Mostly a's
Slushy Hut

Mostly b's
Sunglasses Stand



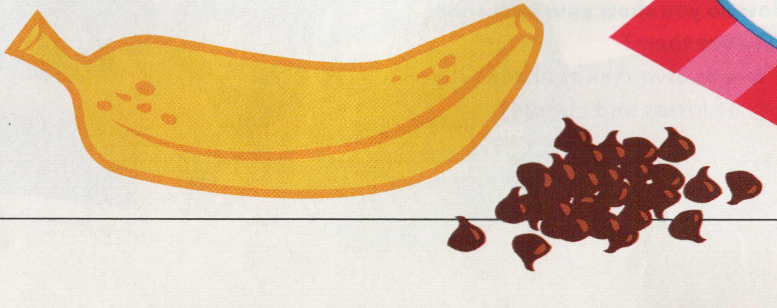
Mostly c's
Shell Store

Banana-Chip Bites

Enjoy this 3-ingredient frozen treat on a hot day.

Cover a baking sheet with parchment paper. Use a butter knife to slice **5 bananas,** and place the banana slices on the baking sheet. Freeze for 1 hour. Remove the banana slices from the freezer, and let them sit at room temperature for 10 minutes.

Put the frozen banana slices and **¼ cup of milk** in a blender. Blend until creamy like a smoothie. Stir **½ cup chocolate chips** into the banana mix, and pour into the mini muffin tins. Freeze for 1 hour. Enjoy!



True Story

Alexa and her dad sang a song that went viral!

Dear American Girl,

It all started with a song. My dad and I love to sing together. One time when I was little, my dad shared one of our songs online for my cousins to see. If you can believe it, more than 29 million people have watched that first video. We kept making videos and have now had more than 190 million views on our songs! Over the years, we've been invited to sing in places like China, Canada, and Australia. And even on a popular TV show here in the U.S.! It's fun to sing in front of people, and I love singing with my dad. It makes me feel calm, and I like the way our voices sound together.

When I was younger, I was bullied a lot. Not all the comments on our videos are good, but seeing the good comments inspires me and gives me good vibes. Singing has helped me to learn to like myself more. If I'm having a bad day, I'll sing a happy song. It makes me feel good and gives me hope. The best part of this experience has been making myself and other people happy through my music.

Sincerely,

Alexa N.
Age 11, California

Illustrations: Tracey Wood

AG Poll

Answer these questions, and then turn the page to see how your answers compare to those of other AG readers.

What's the best way to jazz up your room?

- Change your bedspread
- Hang up posters
- Paint the walls

How do you remember something important?

- Say it out loud
- Read it over and over
- Write it down

What are you most grateful for?

- Your pet
- Your family
- Your friends

AG Poll

What girls told us online

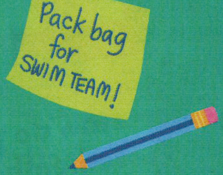
What's the best way to jazz up your room?

45% Paint the walls

23% Change your bedspread

32% Hang up posters

How do you remember something important?



42% Write it down

23% Read it over and over

35% Say it out loud

What are you most grateful for?

66% Your family

13% Your pet

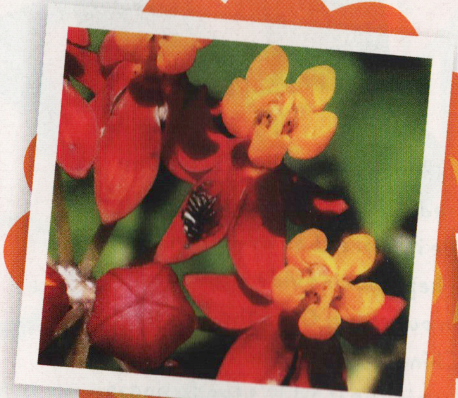
21% Your friends

To answer our weekly poll question, go to americangirl.com/playmagazine

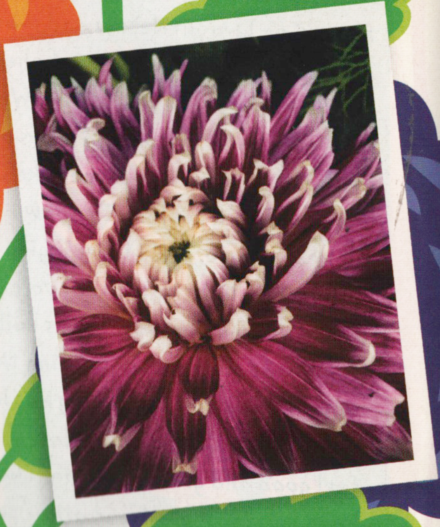
AG Art Gallery

Our readers photographed beautiful flowers.

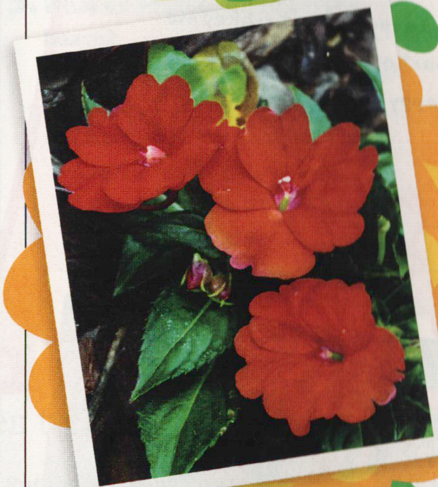
Help us fill our gallery! Send color copies of your **original artwork** or **photos** to the address on page 7. Sorry, we can't return entries.



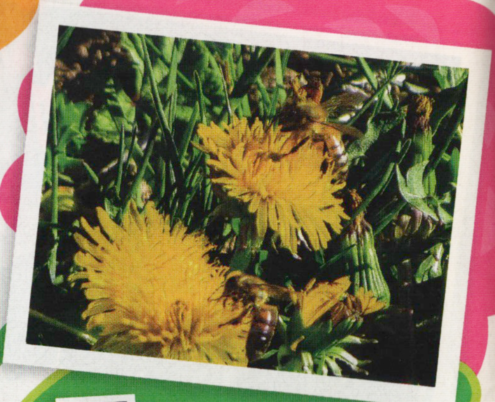
Isabel T.
Age 13, Texas



Leilani Y.
Age 11, Texas



Rylan B.
Age 11, Florida



Lauren L.
Age 11, Colorado

Shining Star

When it comes to helping people or animals, Miriam G. of Maryland believes that every penny and gesture helps. The 13-year-old girl makes and sells elephant sculptures to raise money to help abused Asian elephants in Thailand.

Miriam learned about the mistreatment of these elephants by watching a documentary. She couldn't believe that some elephants in Thailand are taken from the wild as babies, kept in small cages, and when they are older, used to give rides to tourists.

"These animals are suffering, and a lot of people don't realize what's going on," she says. "It made me sad. I needed to do something."

Miriam started a project she calls "They Deserve to Be Free." She sculpts and glazes colorful elephants with help from family, friends, and teachers. Some of the little sculptures are painted pink; others are striped. One of her favorite elephants was glazed in shades of brown to look like fudge marble.

Miriam makes posters to educate the public about suffering elephants and sells her sculptures at a local farmers market for about $15 each. She donates the money she makes to an elephant nature park she has visited in Thailand. The elephants at this park can roam and be happy. "No matter how you do it," Miriam says, "it's really important to help those in need."

You can shine, too. Sell a craft or put on an event to raise money or awareness for an endangered animal you're passionate about.

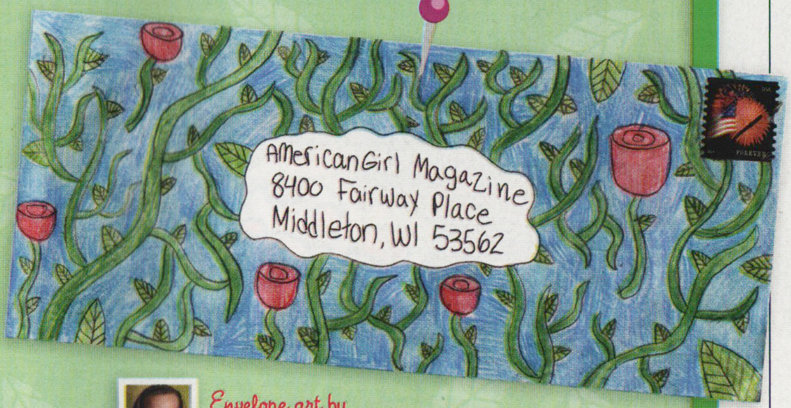
Write to Us

Be sure to include your

- **First and last name**
- **Address and phone number**
- **Birth date, including year**
- **School photo or other portrait**
- **Parent's signature**

Send us a cool envelope! Print our address neatly on the front and your return address on the back.

We can't print every letter, but we read everything you send to us. Hope to hear from you soon! ★



Envelope art by

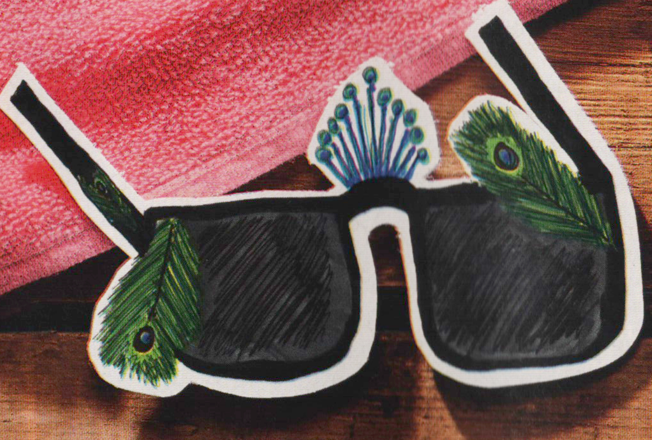
Kenzlie B.

Age 12, South Carolina

Contest

Snappy Shades

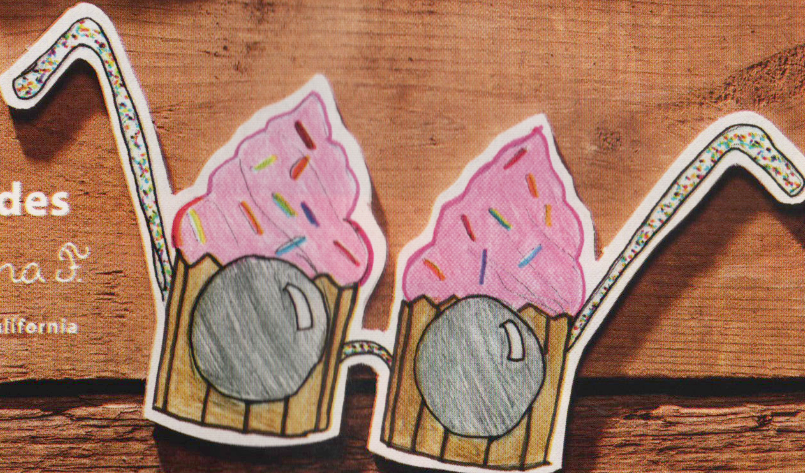
Girls like you created unique sunglasses.



Peacock Perfect

Tarin M.

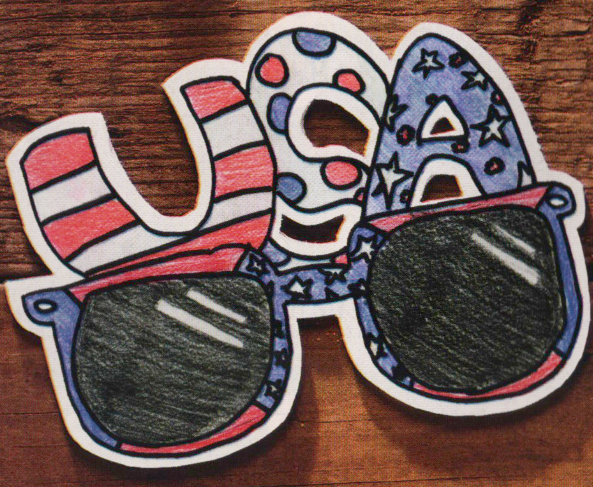
Age 12, Massachusetts



Sweet Shades

Olyana F.

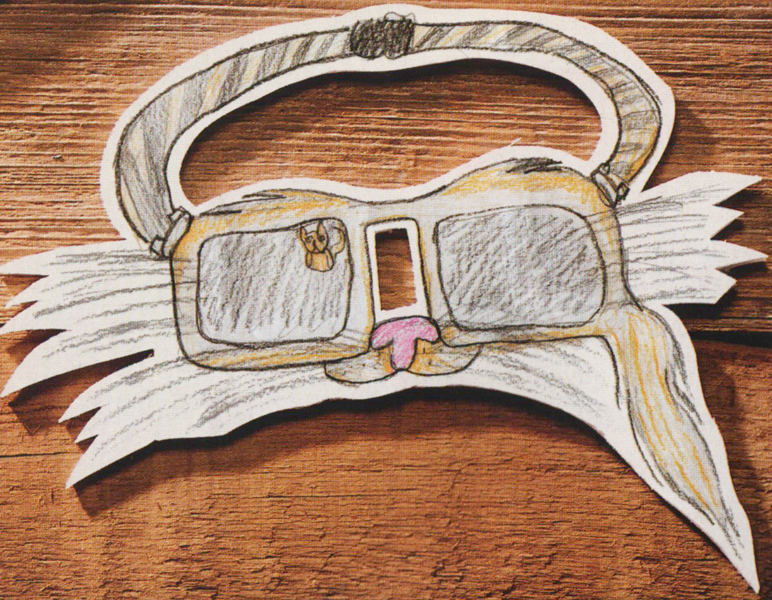
Age 11, California



Hey, USA!

Julia P.

Age 11, Pennsylvania



Kitten Specs

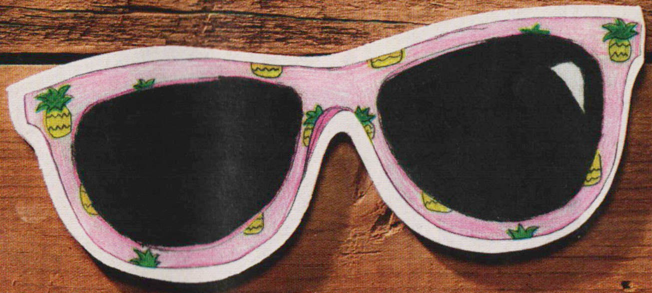
Sarah S.

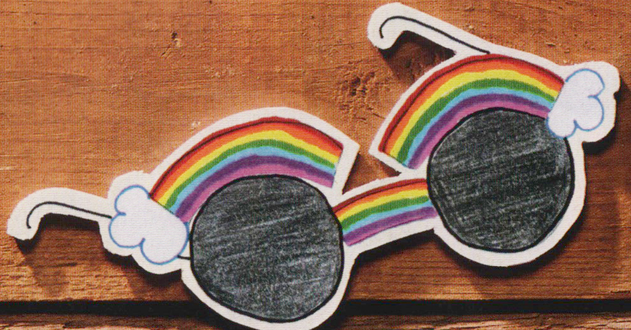
Age 11, Georgia

Pineapple Party

Natalie M.

Age 12, Minnesota





Really Rainbow

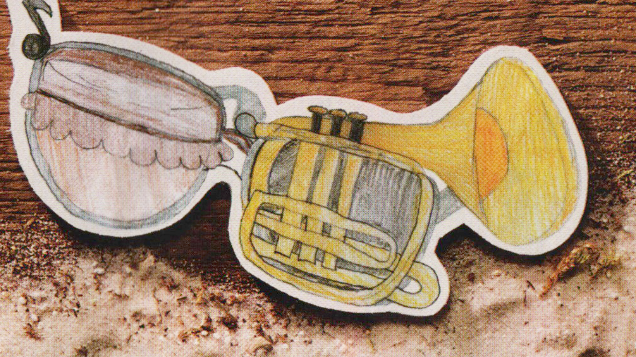
Olivia J.

Age 10, Virginia

Nice Notes

Haley C.

Age 13, Arkansas



Fantastic Fabric

Design a piece of fabric! What pattern would you love to wear or see? Would your fabric square have pink dinosaurs? Or be covered in pretty doodles or bright green cupcakes? Draw your one-of-a-kind fabric pattern on a blank piece of paper, and follow the instructions on page 7 to send it our way. Postmark deadline: August 10, 2016. Winners will appear in the January/February 2017 issue. Sorry—we can't return entries. ★

Camp

CAMP
LAKE
CABIN
CAMP
CAMP
CAMP

95% of you have been to camp before!

What type of camp did you go to?

Outdoor adventure camp 28%

Religious camp 23%

Sports camp 18%

Music or art camp 13%

Drama or theater camp 10%

Horse camp 8%

How many new friends did you make?

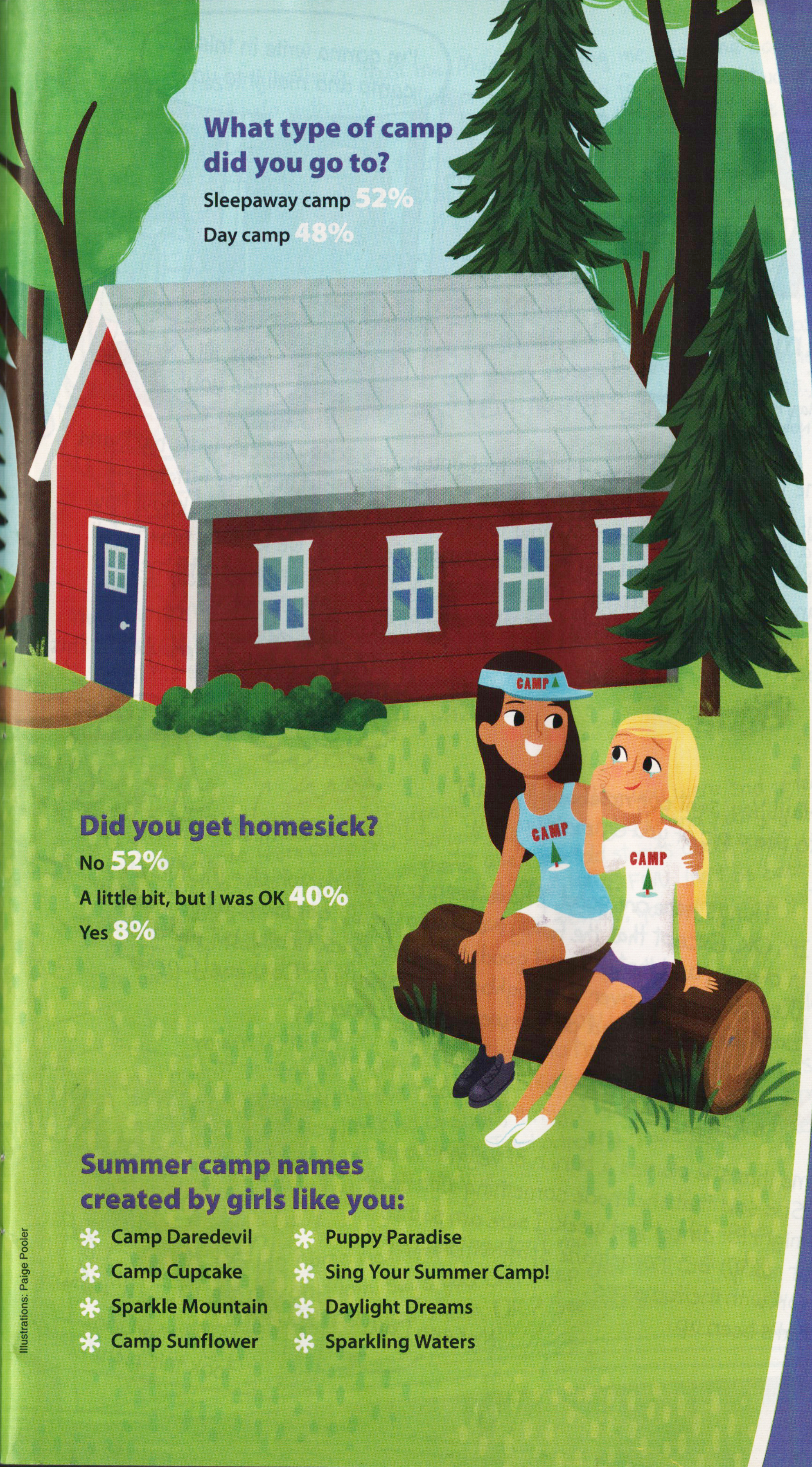
Three or more 46%

I went to camp with a friend I already knew. 34%

Two 11%

One 5%

I didn't make any new friends. 4%



What type of camp did you go to?

Sleepaway camp **52%**

Day camp **48%**

Did you get homesick?

No **52%**

A little bit, but I was OK **40%**

Yes **8%**

Summer camp names created by girls like you:

- Camp Daredevil
- Camp Cupcake
- Sparkle Mountain
- Camp Sunflower
- Puppy Paradise
- Sing Your Summer Camp!
- Daylight Dreams
- Sparkling Waters

Illustrations: Paige Pooler

Coming Up:
Winter

• •

1. Does it snow where you live?
  a. Yes
  b. No
  c. Very rarely

2. What's your favorite winter activity?
  a. Ice skating
  b. Sledding
  c. Snuggling up in front of a fireplace
  d. Skiing or snowboarding
  e. Going to the movies

3. Dogsled **OR** horse-drawn sleigh?

4. What's your favorite cold-weather accessory?
  a. Hat
  b. Earmuffs
  c. Scarf
  d. Mittens or gloves
  e. Other (please list)

5. How cold is too cold?
  a. It's never too cold!
  b. 50–60 degrees
  c. 30–40 degrees
  d. Anything below 30 degrees.

6. Leg warmers **OR** arm warmers?

7. Design a snowboard!

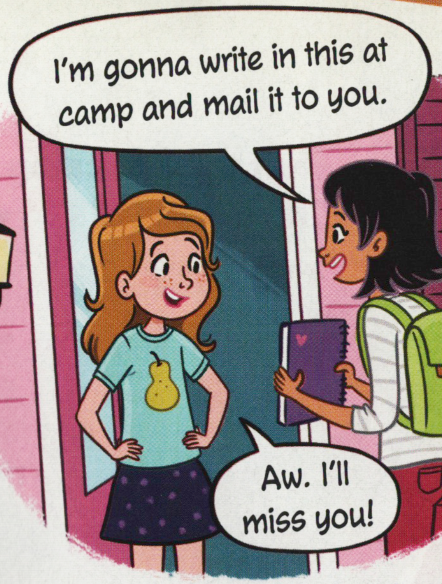
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

Send your answers to the address on page 7, along with your first and last name, address, school or portrait-style photo, and birth date. Postmark deadline: August 10, 2016. Some answers will appear in the January/February 2017 issue. ★

According to Aggie™

Camp Convo

Created by
Mary Richards Beaumont,
Dan Nordskog & Genevieve Kote


I'm gonna write in this at camp and mail it to you.
Aw. I'll miss you!

Presenting . . . the notebook of summer! Like I told you before I left, we can write back and forth while I'm away. (It's not the same as texting—TEXT ME, btw.) But this'll be fun, too.

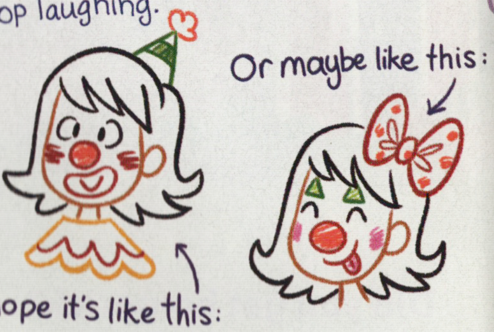
Clown Camp is a blast. Today we learned how to fall down. (Yes, yes, I already know how to fall down, hehe. No jokes about that day in the cafeteria!) Seriously, we learned how to fall down on purpose and not get hurt but still make it funny. I'll show you when I get home. But it's hard to pretend like you got hurt when you totally can't stop laughing.

Write me back!

-Liv

Caaa-shewwws!

Yay! You sent our notebook!! I want to see a pic of you on makeup day.


I hope it's like this:
Or maybe like this:

Things here are good. I have been babysitting, which = MONEY. It's OK. Except that the family's dog, Cashews, got loose while I was in charge, and that was not good. He came back finally, but me and the kids went all over the neighborhood shouting "Cashews! Come back, Cashews!" and people were like, whaaat?

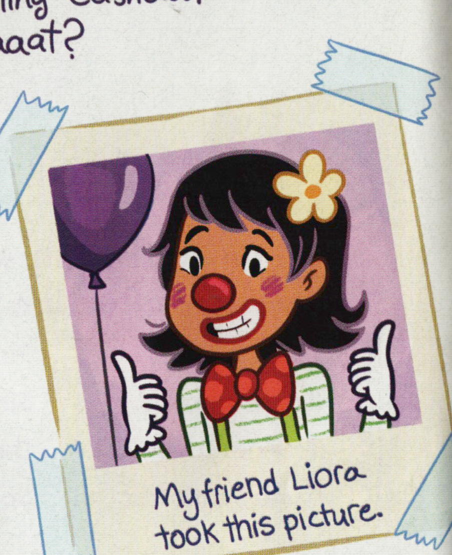
Bye!
-A

Mom told me that she planted a bunch of veggies in the backyard. She said that she made something with fresh veggies every night for dinner last week. I sure am sad to miss that! (Not really.) But homemade spaghetti sauce? Maybe I'd be OK with the tomatoes . . .

Tell me what's been up.

-Liv

Makeup Day!



My friend Liora took this picture.

You're missing nothing, trust me. Mom is making me read one book a week. She says it will help with my spelling or whatever. So far, I've read two good ones, one dumb one, and one I didn't get at all. (I didn't tell Mom about the last one. She might have made me read another one to make up for it!)

Here's something that happened: On Friday, Dad took me to a show at an art gallery downtown. It was super fancy. They had people walking around with trays of little snacks. Dad said they were "or-dervs", or however you spell it. You could have as many as you wanted! I ate a bunch, but then I got a ~~wierd~~ weird one that looked like a tiny toast with cat food on it, and I was done.

How do you get those noses to stay on? A special nose glue or something? (Ew. Nose glue sounds grosssss.)

–A

Hehe, no nose glue. The nose is a foam thing that pinches onto your nose. It doesn't hurt, but sometimes it makes you sound funny when you talk, like you have a cold.

That art show sounds so cool! Except for the cat food part. Ewww.

Tell me something that happened in the park. Or a funny story about your kitty, or a yummy dessert your dad made, or anything! It's not like I'm homesick or anything. I just want to know. (Shhhh, I'm a teeny bit homesick).

–Liv

Oh no! Don't be homesick! Remember last year when you were sad after you came home from camp and how you missed everybody and how you kept having to say, "You had to be there" when you told stories about stuff that happened because I kind of didn't get it? Just HAVE FUN. We'll be back at school so fast that it'll feel like tomorrow. And besides, you hardly ever get to wear a big red nose in class. –A

You're right. I love being here! And I know I should enjoy it while I can. I'm just . . . I don't know. It's like I want to have everything I like all at once.

Today was funny. We had a tiny bike race (a race on tiny bikes, I mean), and I won!! Since I'm kind of short, it might have been easier for me than for people with longer legs, but I don't care. I got a trophy made out of a bike bell! I can't wait to put it on my shelf at home.

–Liv

You're coming home next week, so don't mail this back – give it to me in person! Mom says you can sleep over that Saturday when you're back. Ask your mom, OK? See you soon!

–A

Don't miss my next misadventure:

WELL, THAT WAS WEIRD . . .

SODA Lab

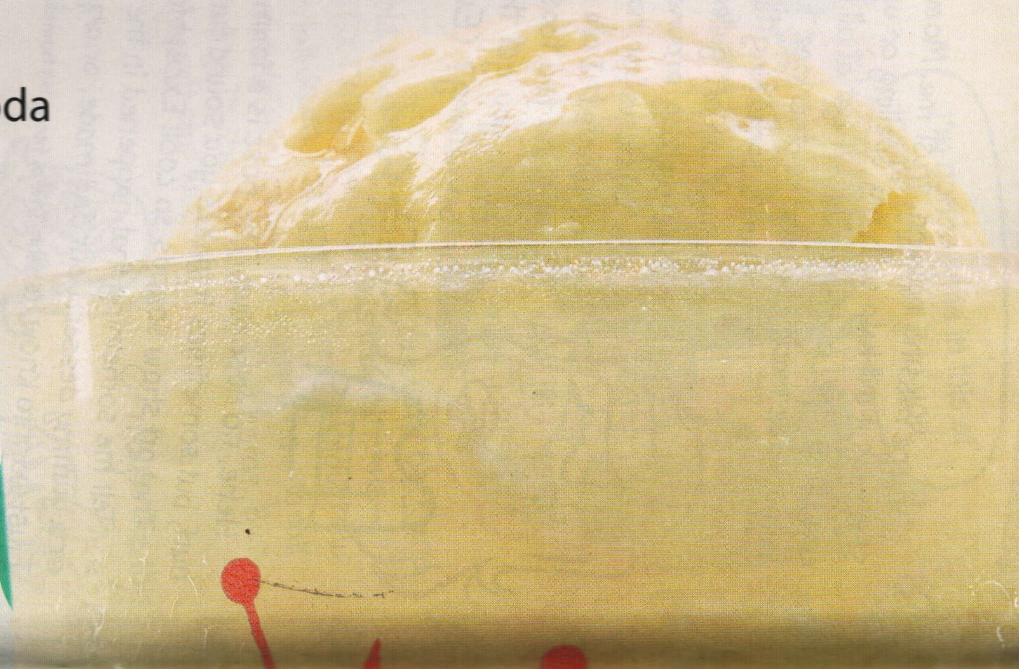
Each of these recipes requires an adult's supervision. Be sure to ask for help when using the stove and working with hot liquids.

Be a fizz whiz! Learn the secrets of soda and create fantastic new flavors.

1. Choose a soda flavor and gather the ingredients.

Choose a flavor from the following pages: cherry vanilla, peach raspberry, pineapple coconut, strawberry lime, or orange mango.

Soda pop, pop, cold drinks, soft drinks, and fizzy pop are all names for soda.



2. Make the flavor syrup.

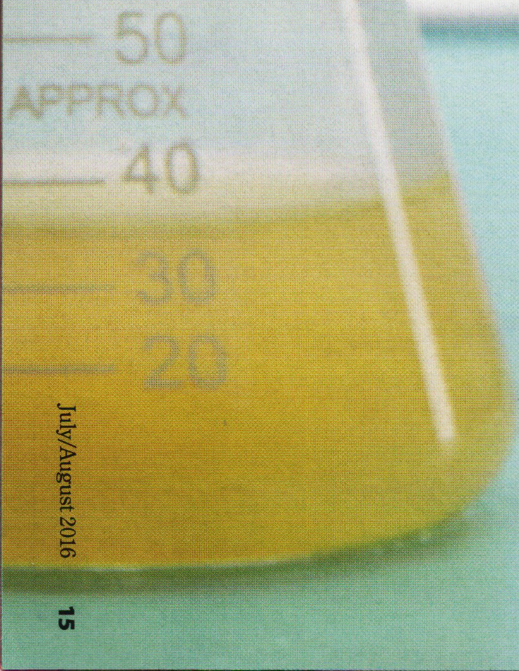
For each flavor, stir together the ingredients (fruit, flavoring, water, and sugar) in a medium saucepan. Bring the mixture to a boil on medium-high heat. Boil for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Ask an adult to remove from the heat and to pour the mixture through a mesh strainer into a heat-safe container. Let cool completely. Cover and store in the refrigerator.

3. Create the drink.

Pour 3–4 tablespoons of flavor syrup into a glass. (Add more or less depending on your preference.) Rinse some ice cubes, and add them to the glass (rinsing will reduce the amount of foam). Add 1 cup of cold carbonated water and gently stir. (Seltzer water works best. Find it at the grocery store.)

When soda first became popular, the most common flavors were orange, pineapple, almond, strawberry, and ginger.

People once thought carbonated water was a health drink. Some sodas were even sold as "medicines" that claimed to cure headaches or give you energy!



50
APPROX
40
30
20

In the 1890s, the most popular soda drink in New York City was called the chocolate egg cream. It was made with seltzer water, milk, and chocolate syrup!

Peach Raspberry

- 2 cups fresh peaches, sliced
- ½ cup fresh raspberries
- 2 cups water
- 1 cup granulated sugar

An ice cream float is made by putting ice cream on top of soda. An ice cream soda is when soda and ice cream are stirred together. Turn to page 48 for some ice cream float ideas!

Pineapple Coconut

- 2 cups fresh pineapple chunks
- ½ cup shredded coconut
- 2 cups water
- 1 cup granulated sugar

Cherry Vanilla

- 2 cups frozen cherries (pitted)
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups water
- 1 cup granulated sugar

Today you can order a hand-mixed soda at some coffee shops. Many places call them "Italian sodas," and they're made by stirring a flavor syrup into seltzer water.

Orange Mango

- 2 cups chopped mango
- ½ cup fresh-squeezed orange juice
- 2 cups water
- 1 cup granulated sugar

SODA SCIENCE

Store-bought soda begins as a mixture of flavoring, sweetener, and filtered water. Right before the soda is sealed in bottles or cans, a machine forces an odorless, colorless gas called carbon dioxide (CO_2) into the mixture. When you open a soda and expose it to air, the bubbles of carbon dioxide are activated and escape to the surface, making the drink fizzy. Once all the carbon dioxide bubbles are released, the soda goes flat!

For fizzier soda, store seltzer water in the refrigerator. The cold temperature makes it harder for the carbon dioxide molecules to escape, which means more tiny bubbles! ★

Strawberry Lime

- 2 cups sliced strawberries
- ½ cup lime juice
- 2 cups water
- 1 cup granulated sugar

Styling: Stef Endres

GET EXPLORING

Which summer adventure is most like your personality?

1. Which summer project would you like to work on?

a. Designing glow-in-the-dark bracelets

b. Painting your desk a new color

c. Making a small soccer net to shoot on

d. Decorating your camping backpack with cool pins

2. What stickers would you use to decorate your journal?

a. Cute turtles

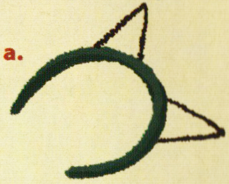
b. Shimmery polka dots

c. Basketballs and ballet shoes

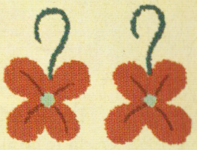
d. Moon and stars

3. Which accessory would you choose?

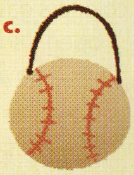
a.



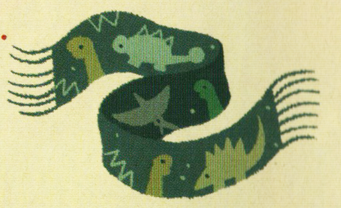
b.



c.



d.



4. Who would you love to interview?

a. An animal-rights activist

b. A fashion designer

c. An Olympian

d. Someone who has climbed Mt. Everest

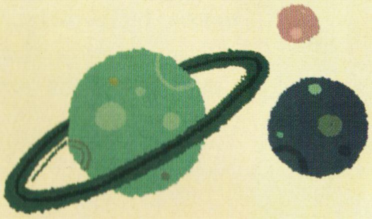
5. You would do a science report on . . .

a. the slowest animal in the world.

b. solar systems.

c. the physics of surfing.

d. what it feels like to skydive.



6. What's your favorite summer treat?

a. A frozen fudge bar

b. A multicolored slushy

c. Strawberry ice cream

d. A healthy smoothie

7. How would you cheer up a friend? You would . . .

a. remind her of some really funny memories.

b. invite her over to watch her favorite movie.

c. invite her to go to a football game with your family.

d. try to distract her with a long bike ride.

Illustrations: Stevie Lewis

ANSWERS

Mostly a's: Hiking

You are laid-back, a little goofy, and animal-crazy. You almost always have a smile on your face, and you love spending time with your friends and family. You know that you can always count on them when you're down. Hiking is the perfect summer activity for you!

Mostly b's: Paddle boarding

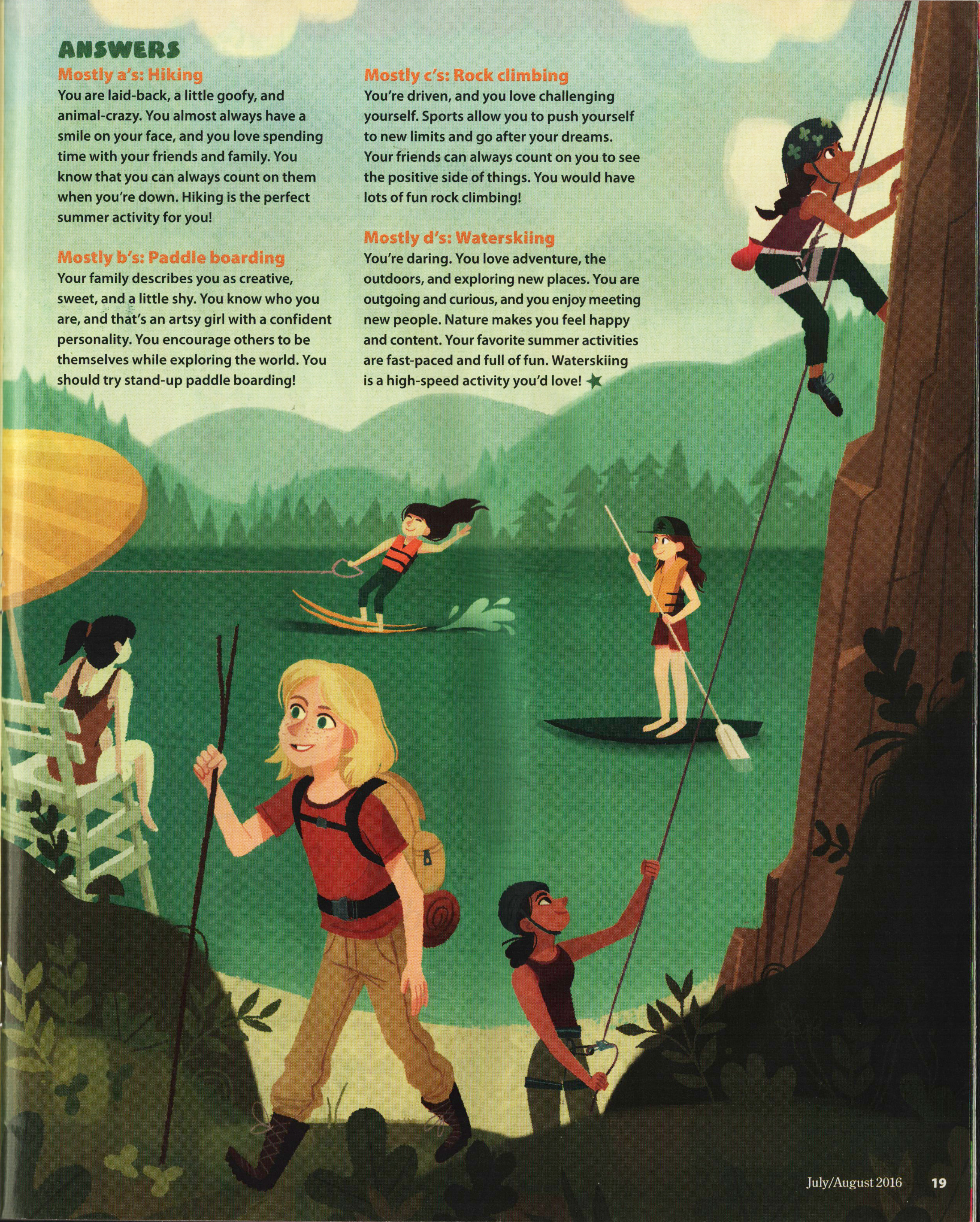
Your family describes you as creative, sweet, and a little shy. You know who you are, and that's an artsy girl with a confident personality. You encourage others to be themselves while exploring the world. You should try stand-up paddle boarding!

Mostly c's: Rock climbing

You're driven, and you love challenging yourself. Sports allow you to push yourself to new limits and go after your dreams. Your friends can always count on you to see the positive side of things. You would have lots of fun rock climbing!

Mostly d's: Waterskiing

You're daring. You love adventure, the outdoors, and exploring new places. You are outgoing and curious, and you enjoy meeting new people. Nature makes you feel happy and content. Your favorite summer activities are fast-paced and full of fun. Waterskiing is a high-speed activity you'd love! ★

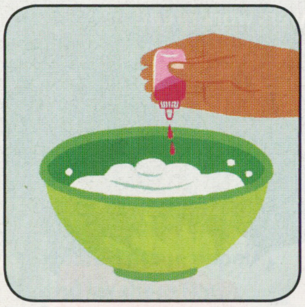


Flowers & Friends

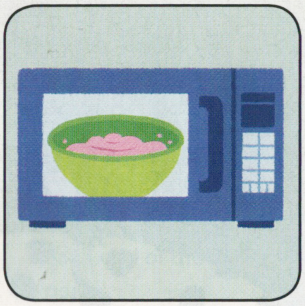
Have some floral fun at a colorful garden party!

Toadstool Cupcakes

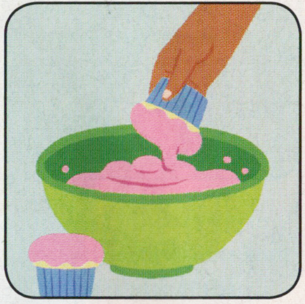
Decorate cupcakes to look like woodland wonders. Before the party, ask an adult to help you make a batch of vanilla cupcakes. Fill each cup to the top so the cupcake will have a mushroom shape when baked. After baking, let the cupcakes cool completely. Then follow these steps to transform them into toadstools.



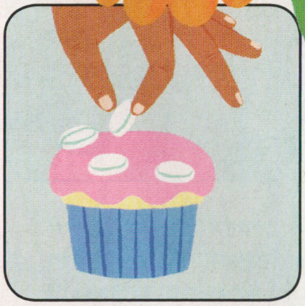
1. Empty a 16-oz. tub of ready-made vanilla frosting into a bowl. Stir in a few drops of red food coloring until the frosting is dark pink.



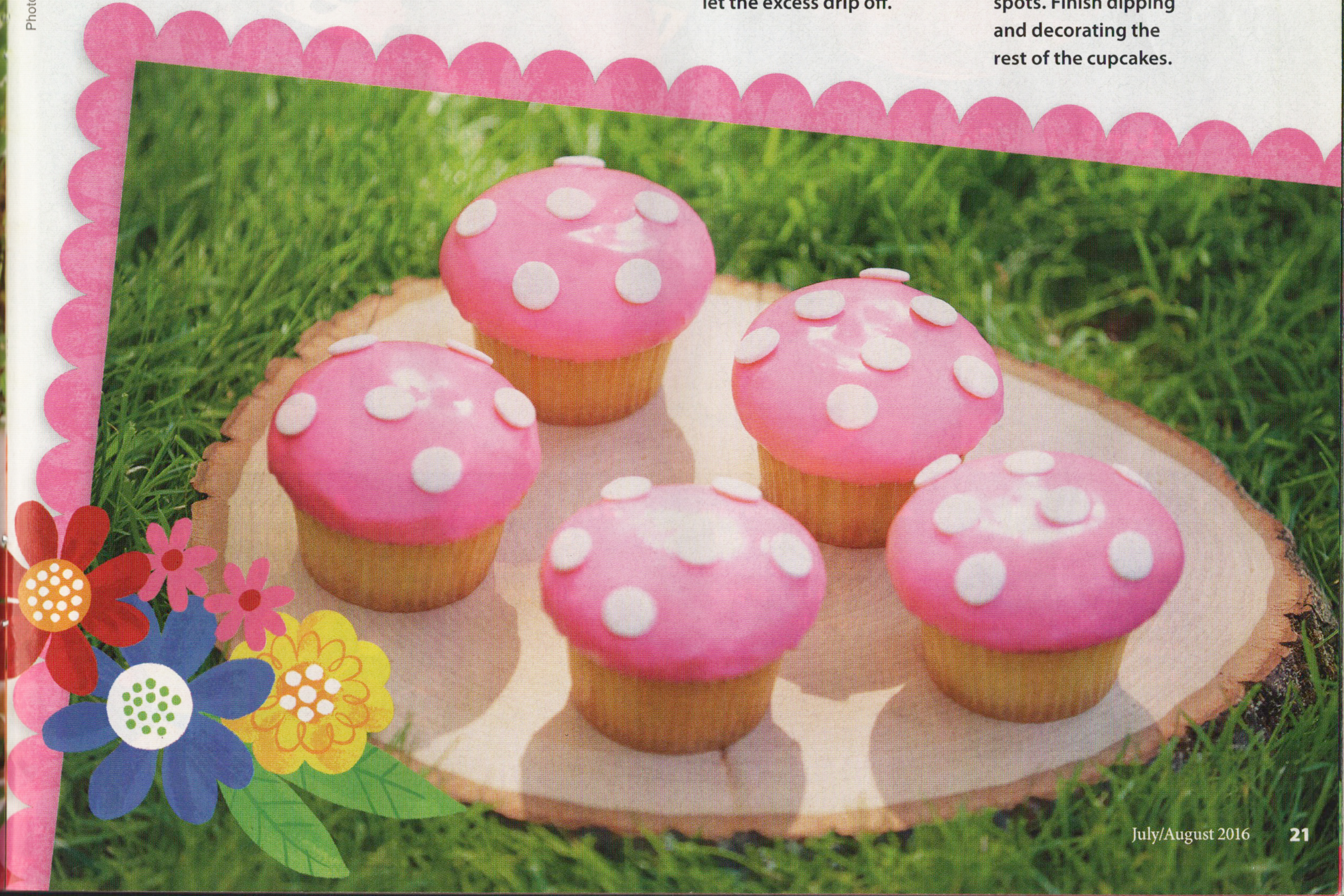
2. Heat the frosting in the microwave for 10–15 seconds until it's slightly runny. Stir until smooth.



3. Turn a cupcake upside down and dip the top of it into the frosting. Once the top is coated, remove the cupcake from the frosting and let the excess drip off.



4. Set the cupcake right-side up on wax paper. Before the frosting sets, place round candy sprinkles on the frosting for spots. Finish dipping and decorating the rest of the cupcakes.



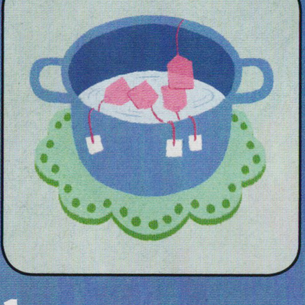
Photos: Steven Talley Styling: Aubre Andrus, Andrea Debbink, Suzi Lee Illustrations: Alyssa Nassner

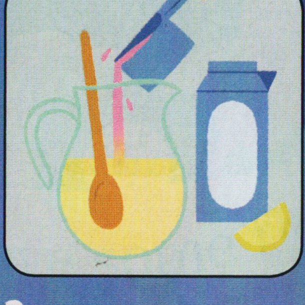
Tea Time

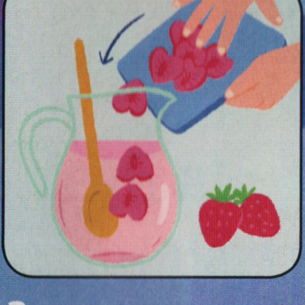
Set a table for an afternoon tea break. Use plates and straws in a black-and-white color scheme. Then add bright hues with colorful jars and flowers—fabric or paper flowers work great!

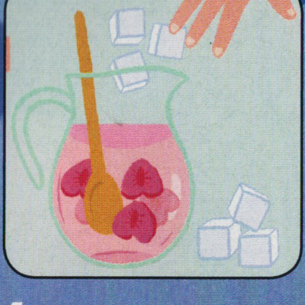
Tea Lemonade Cooler

Try a tangy mix of herbal tea, lemonade, and berries.





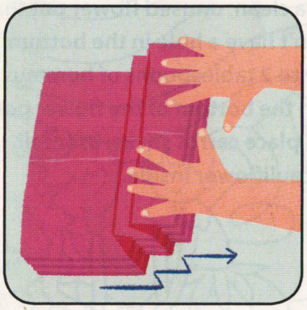




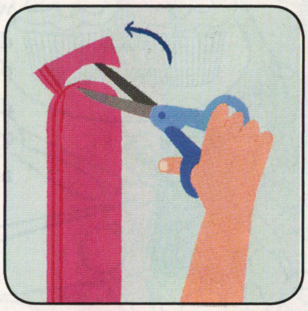
1. Ask an adult to boil 2 cups of water in a medium saucepan. Once the water is boiling, have the adult remove it from the heat and add 4 chamomile tea bags. Leave the tea bags in the water for 5 minutes.
2. Remove the tea bags and let the tea cool. Pour it into a pitcher and stir in 4 cups of pink lemonade.
3. Ask an adult to slice 1 cup of strawberries. Add the strawberries to the pitcher.
4. Place the tea lemonade in the refrigerator until chilled.

Fairy-Tale Flowers

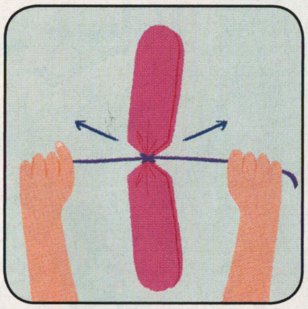
Set the scene with fantastical flowers. Use these paper blooms as party decorations.



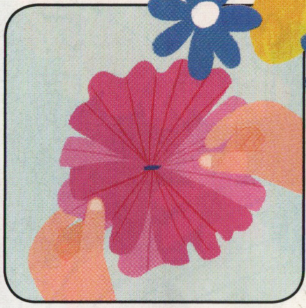
1. Stack seven sheets of colored tissue paper and lay them flat. Accordion-fold the sheets together.



2. Use scissors to round off each end of the folded paper.



3. Use a 12-inch string to tightly tie a double knot at the center of the folded paper.



4. Gently peel each layer of tissue paper toward the center to make a pom-pom shape. Now you have a beautiful blossom!

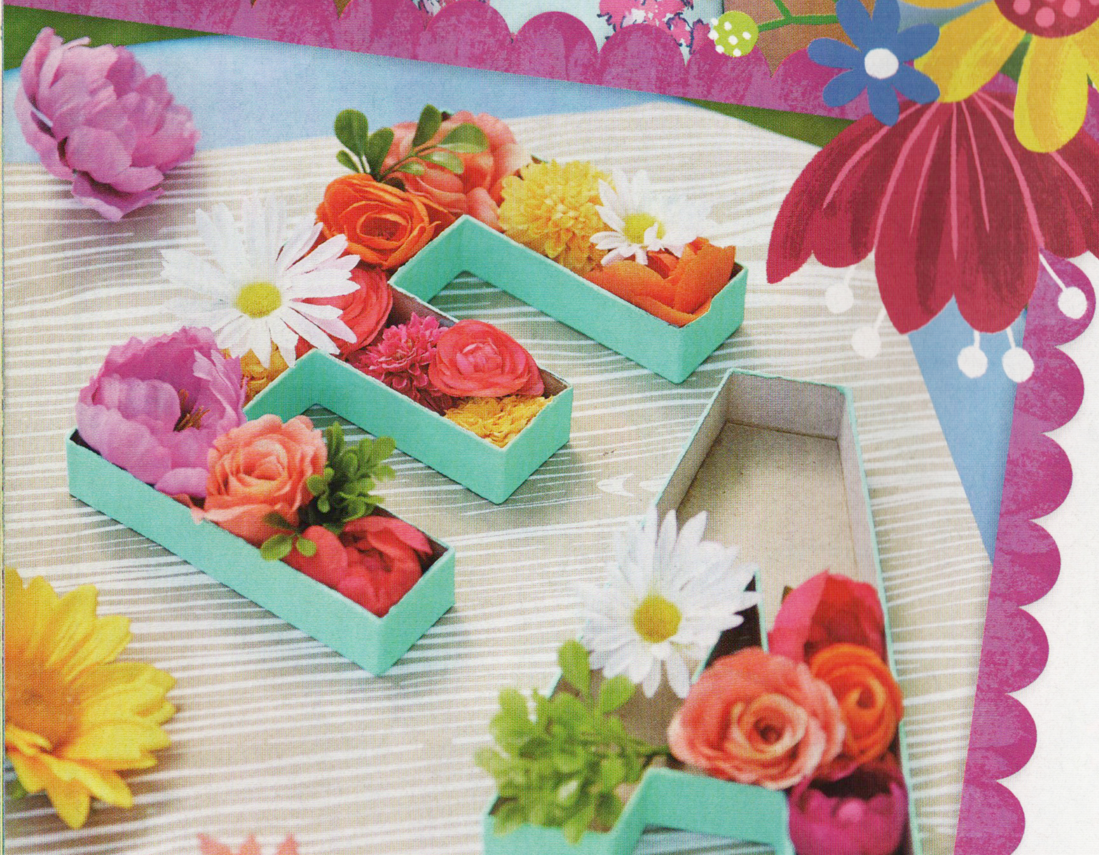
Garden Garland

Create an old-fashioned garland with a modern look. Start with a length of string and a stack of paper doilies in bold colors. Starting at one end of the string, fold a doily in half around it. Attach the two sides of the doily together using double-stick tape. Continue attaching doilies a few inches apart along the string. Once the garland is the length you want, ask an adult to help you hang it.

Photos: Steven Talley Styling: Aubre Andrus, Andrea Debbink, Susie Lee Illustrations: Alyssa Nassner

Fresh-Picked Snacks

For a straight-from-the-garden snack, serve fresh veggies. Start with a clean, unused flower pot that doesn't have a hole in the bottom. Put 1 to 2 tablespoons of hummus or dip in the bottom of the flower pot. Then place carrot sticks, broccoli, and cauliflower inside.

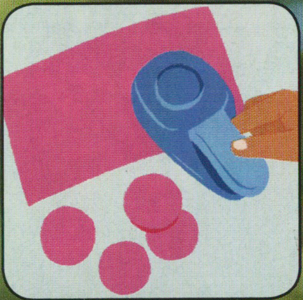


Wall Garden

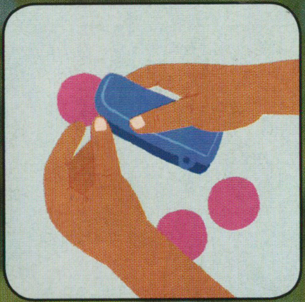
Start by covering your work surface and placing a pile of fake flowers and leaves in the center of the work space. Give each guest a 3D cardboard letter that's her initial (available at craft stores). Before you begin, ask an adult to use scissors to remove the front side of each letter. Cover the sides of the letters with nontoxic acrylic paint. Let dry completely. Then have each guest fill her letter with fake flowers, gluing them in place with craft glue. Let dry.

Beautiful Blossoms

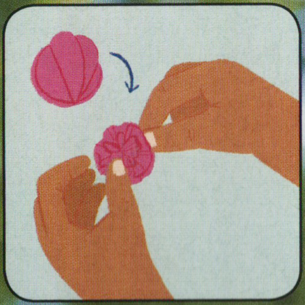
Use these paper flowers to create summery accessories.



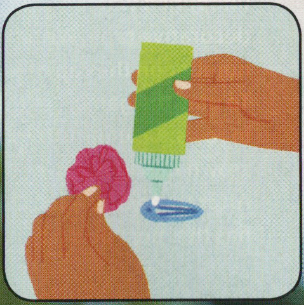
1. For each flower, you'll need 7 small circles of tissue paper. Fold a sheet of tissue paper a few times to make it thick and use a circle-shaped punch.



2. Stack the 7 paper circles, and staple them together in the center.



3. Separate each layer of tissue paper by pulling it upward and fluffing it a bit.



4. Use craft glue to attach the paper blossoms to headbands and clips. Let dry before wearing.

Flower Crown Toss

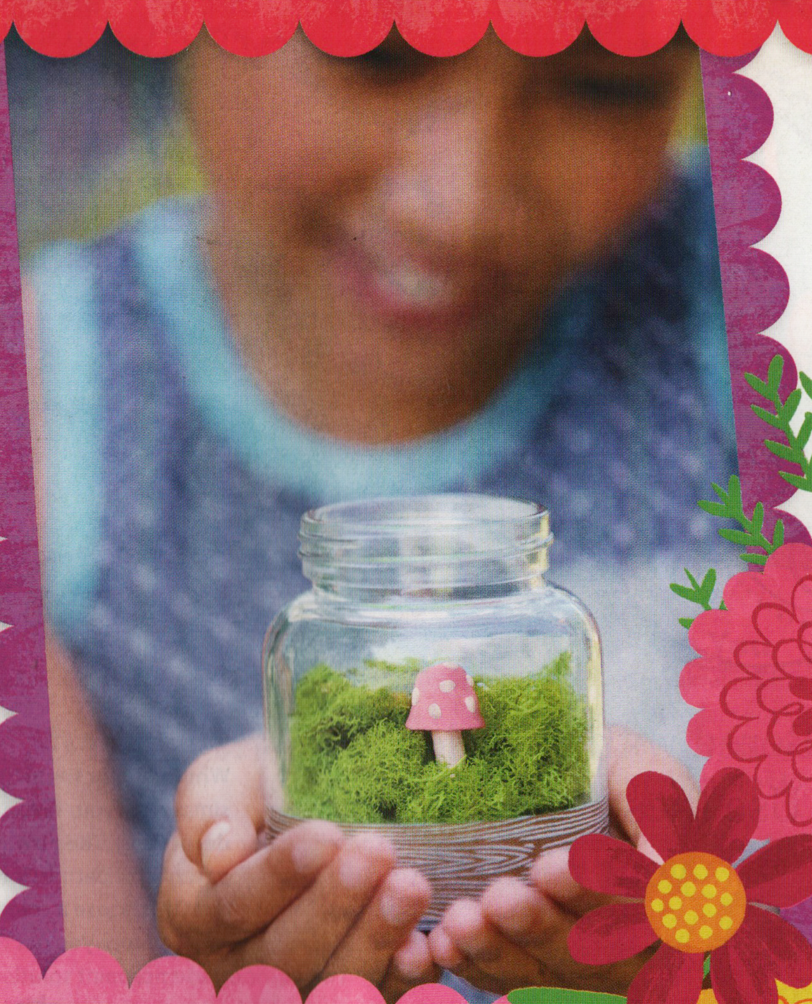
Before the party, decorate 10 unopened water bottles with decorative tape. Write a different number on the cap of each bottle. To play the game, set the bottles in rows. Take turns tossing a flower crown headband over the bottles. After three tries each, see who has the most points!

Lawn Bowling

For this game, reuse the water bottles from the Flower Crown Toss, or make a second set. When you're ready to play, set the bottles in a triangle shape on the lawn. Use a rubber ball and take turns trying to knock them down. Keep score as in regular bowling.

Garden To-Go

Create a tiny terrarium! Give each guest a small clean jar. Wrap the base of the jar with decorative tape. Place a layer or two of stones in the bottom. Next, add a layer of craft moss (available at craft stores). Make mini toadstools or creatures using nontoxic air-dry clay. Note: Craft moss is dried and does not need water or sunlight.



Grow-Home Gifts

Give each guest a berry basket (available at craft stores) to carry her terrarium and flower accessories. Add flower seeds so she can grow a garden of her own! ★

Sunflower
Sunflower

Space Solutions

Bored with your decor? Use these tips to style your room!

Color Clash

Whether your room is plain white or a shade that is simply not your favorite, colors can be tricky when decorating. The obvious way to change this is to ask your parents for permission to repaint your room. If they give the OK, choose a color carefully, because it could be a while before you get to paint your room again. Or try these no-paint solutions instead:

- **Accessorize.** Pillows, lamps, frames, and rugs in a color that pops can completely change the look of your room.

Text: Carrie Anton Photos: Radlund Photography Styling: Carrie Anton Illustrations: Marilena Perrilli

- **Add large art.** Create a cool picture collage on one large wall. Instead of the wall color you dislike being the focal point, all eyes will be drawn to your DIY art.

- **Curtain call.** Ask a parent to help you hang a rod with two curtains in a fun pattern or bold color behind or in place of your headboard. It will cover the wall and give your room a new look.

Tiny Territory

If your room feels like the walls are closing in on you, try these ideas for more space:

- **Use mirrors.** You might not be able to change the square footage of your space, but you can trick the eye. Mirrors help to reflect more light, making the room seem bigger.

- **Shift your stuff.** If your bed is in the middle of your room, you might be able to create more space by pushing it against the wall.

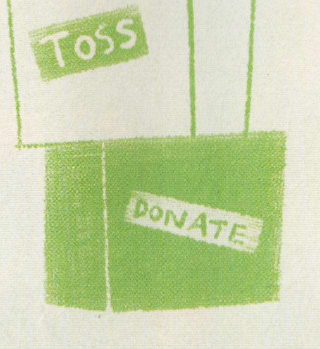
- **Lighten up.** Dark decor can make a room feel smaller than it really is. Keep curtains, rugs, and bedspreads in light colors and lightweight fabrics.

True You

Get permission to hang up posters that reflect your personal style. If you've outgrown your bedspread, flip it over to show the other side instead.

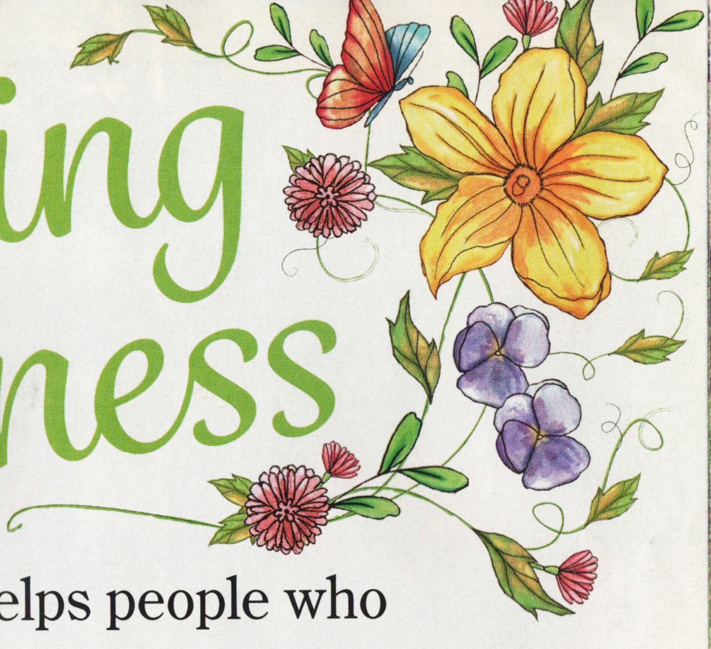
Sort It

If there is stuff everywhere in your room, declutter and simplify. Sort the items in your room, making sure to ask yourself what you really need and use. Then make three piles—Keep, Toss, and Donate—and sort your stuff into these groups. For things that have sentimental value but you don't use, store them somewhere out of the way for safekeeping.



More room decorating tips can be found in *Styling Spaces*. ★

American Girl
truly me
Styling Spaces
Discover your unique room style with quizzes, activities, crafts—and more!



Growing Kindness

Ten-year-old Hailey helps people who are homeless, one harvest at a time.

Have you ever seen someone who is homeless and wondered about that person? Have you ever noticed someone sleeping near the street or standing in line at a shelter? I have. Some of those people are now my friends. One man I know is named Billy Ray. He served in a war. He's super nice. I know another man who has a really sweet dog named Tonka.

The first time I ever got to know a person who was homeless was when my mom and I gave a man a sandwich. I was six years old. We were on our way somewhere when we passed him. He looked hungry. I asked my mom if we could buy him something to eat. She said OK.

Giving the man food made me feel good. The second time I helped a homeless person, I gave a man some soup on a really cold day. I like doing small things to help others and trying to make the world a better place.

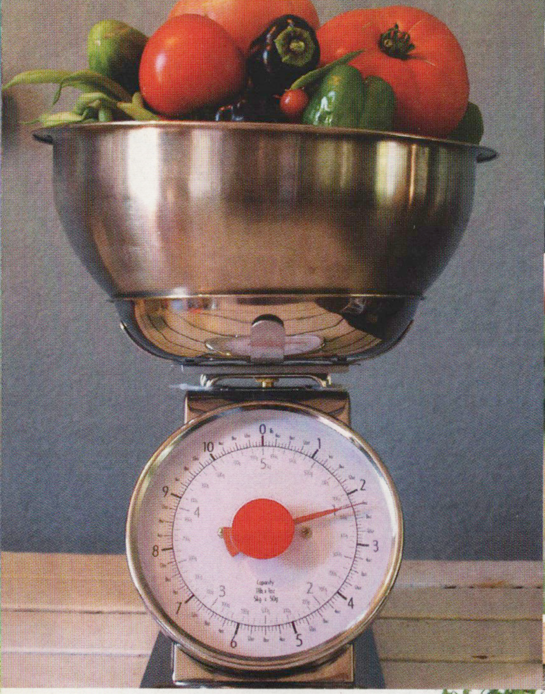
Some people think homeless people don't deserve attention. But I think they do. People who end up homeless sometimes may be people who have simply lost their jobs. Or they are veterans with nowhere to go. I believe everyone should be treated equally. Everyone deserves respect and care.

When my mom told me about how homeless people often don't have access to fresh food, I felt bad. I wanted my friends to have more nutritious foods to eat. With help from my family, I planted a garden in my backyard. I share the fruits and vegetables with homeless people in my community. At first, my garden was small. But after we moved to a different house, I had a big grassy area that I could use to grow more.

My dad and granddad helped me pull up the grass to start my new garden. We made a game out of picking up all the rocks. My entire family, including my mom and my little brother and sister, helped to loosen the soil. After that, a bunch of worms moved into my garden, which meant the soil should be good for growing.

Each spring, I make sure the plants go in the right spots so that they get the right amount of sunshine. In one section, I grow strawberries and blueberries. In another part, I grow tomatoes and melons and beans. I also plant carrots, cucumbers, peas, spinach, and different kinds of lettuce. I have to water my garden a lot—sometimes twice a day.

Illustrations: Suzanne Washington

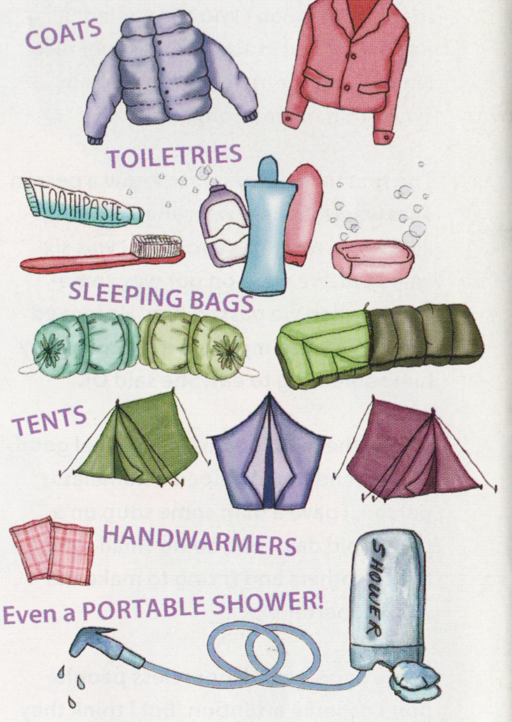


About once a week during the summer, I fill a bucket with tomatoes and other produce from the garden. Then I wash everything and offer it to homeless people around our community. I make homemade pickles with the cucumbers and give those away, too.

You might think it's hard to give away the food I grow. But it's not. It's like the best gift I can give.

After the first year of growing food to help homeless people, I started to realize that my friends needed other things, too, such as toothbrushes. And coats, gloves, and hats. So I set up a wish list with an online store. With help from my parents, I made a website and used social media to ask people to donate.

I was really surprised at the response. The first week, there were about 10 huge boxes on my doorstep when I got home from school. I hauled it all into my room and sorted through:



The next time I delivered food, I brought the other stuff to pass out, too. It made my friends really, really happy. And I felt really, really happy that I could help. People said thank you a lot, so I guess they appreciated it a lot.

“I want to make a difference for my community.”

Spending time with people who don’t have homes has helped me to better understand what it means to be homeless. We get a lot of rain where I live in Washington, and sometimes it’s really cold. I don’t like imagining what it’s like for people who have to sleep outside. Everyone should have a roof over his or her head.

So, as you might have guessed, I wanted to help. Now my goal is to give every homeless person in my community a sleeping shelter. That’s a small, snug wooden structure that a person can sleep in. The supplies to build one cost a lot of money. So I went back to work trying to raise money online.

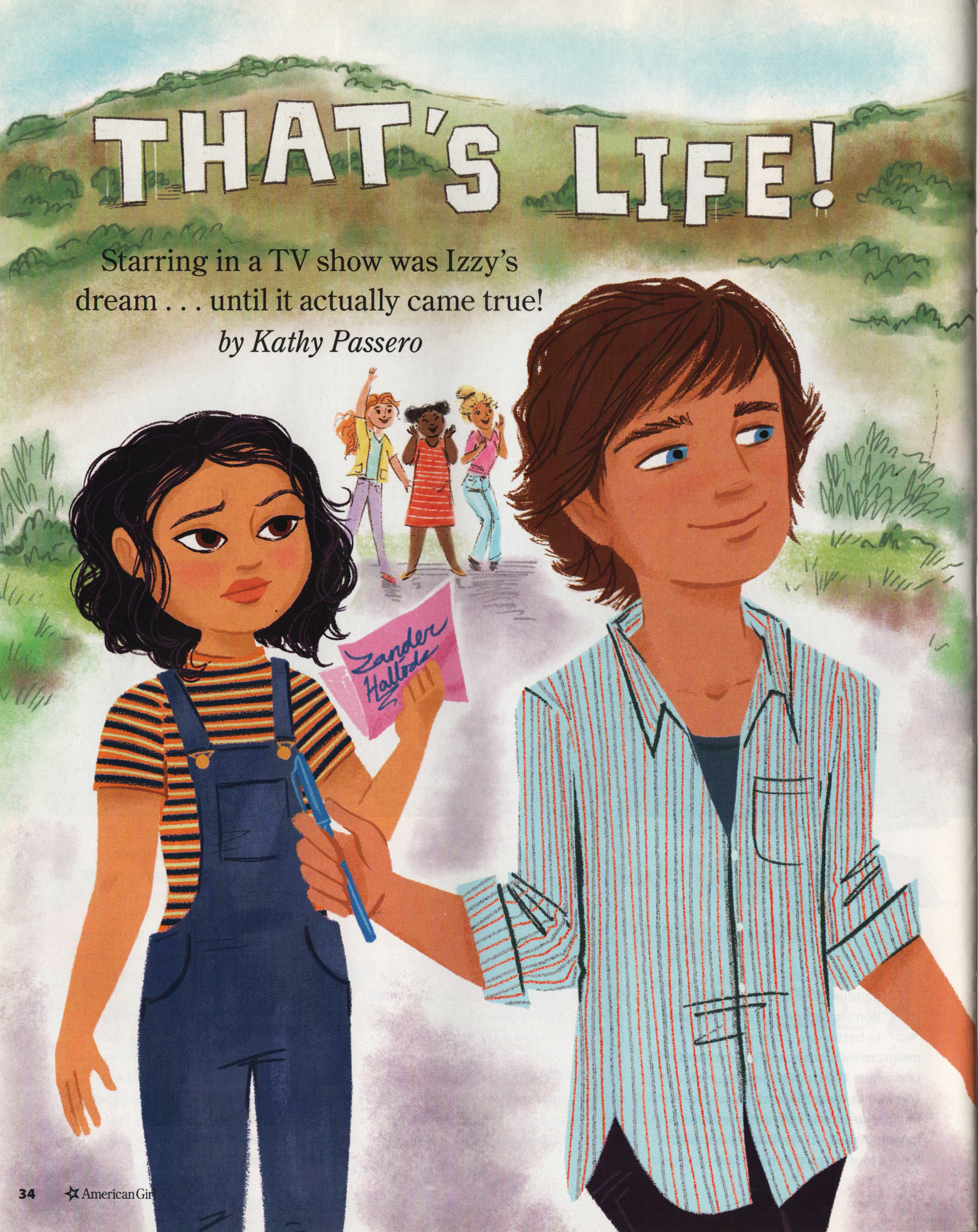
With help from my mom, dad, and granddad, I have finished one sleeping shelter. We bought the wood, the insulation, and everything else we needed to build it ourselves. It has three windows and is painted blue and white. I plan to put a small mattress inside.

I want to make a difference for my community—that’s what keeps me going. I see homeless people as people and also as friends. I like to do things to help my friends. So I share the food I grow. And for one person, my first sleeping shelter will become a place to call home. ★

THAT'S LIFE!

Starring in a TV show was Izzy's dream . . . until it actually came true!

by Kathy Passero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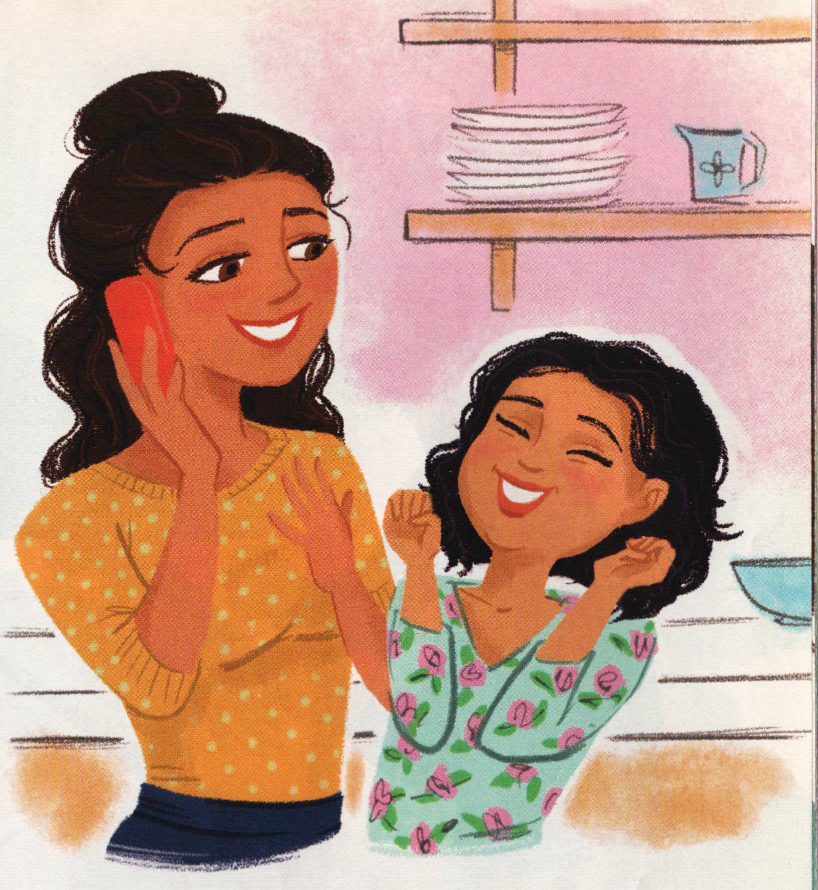


“Best day EVER!”

Mom and I danced around the kitchen when we got the call saying I’d landed a starring role in a new teen TV series called *That’s Life!*

ME! Out of more than a hundred 13-year-olds who auditioned, they picked me to play PJ. My character was a “fun-loving free spirit who moves from the Midwest to Malibu, trading the farm life she knew for surf, sand, and glam.” That was totally me! Well, almost. So what if I’d never set foot on a farm? Best of all, I’d get to play the sidekick of my favorite young actress, Ellen Sweeney, who was starring in the lead role of Perry.

“You’ve worked hard, Izzy. You deserve this,” Mom told me. When she said “you,” I knew she meant both of us. I wasn’t the only one who had made sacrifices so I could live out my dream of becoming a serious actress. Mom had moved to California with me, gotten a new job, and driven me to countless auditions.

“We both deserve this!” I reminded her.

The next day Mom drove me to Central Studios so my director, Max Martin, could introduce me to everyone I’d be working with. It was a huge place, with two dozen stages, recording studios, offices, and a backlot. Mom had written down notes about where to meet Max, and I was trying to decipher her handwriting when a sandy-haired boy about a head taller than I am hurried past.

“Excuse me,” Mom began. She was going to ask him for directions, but he pulled a pen out of his pocket, scribbled something on the paper I was holding, then ran off.

“What on earth . . . ?” Mom began. We were standing there dumbfounded when a trio of girls surrounded us.

“OMG! You got his autograph!” one squealed.

“You are SO lucky!” the second agreed. “Did he say anything? I love his British accent!”

“What?” I asked.

“Don’t you know who that is?” demanded the third girl. “That’s Zander Halliday!”

“Who?”

“Zander Halliday, the Surfin’ Jeans guy!” she said. “You’ve never heard of Surfin’ Jeans?!”

“Look, there he is!” her friend cried, and off they ran.

While Mom found a security guard to point us in the right direction, I borrowed her phone to look up Surfin’ Jeans. “It’s a British brand,” I told Mom, reading as I followed her. “What a bizarre name. Who surfs in jeans? Anyway, that kid’s the model for them. It says he’s starring in a TV series.”

“Maybe his show is filming at Central Studios, too,” Mom suggested.

“Whoa!” I stopped. “Listen to this: ‘Director Max Martin, as famous for his unpredictable plot twists off set as on, has replaced award winner Ellen

Illustrations: Elisa Chavarri

Sweeney with a male star for his much-anticipated new teen series. Rumor has it, the newcomer is none other than denim-clad dream boy Zander Halliday!'"

If Zander was as surprised to see me on set as I was to see him, he hid it well. With so many people to meet and so much to do, it was late afternoon before I got a chance to pull him aside.

"Listen, I just wanted to tell you I didn't want your autograph," I said.

"Oh." His blue eyes widened. "Right. OK. Did you want to return it?"

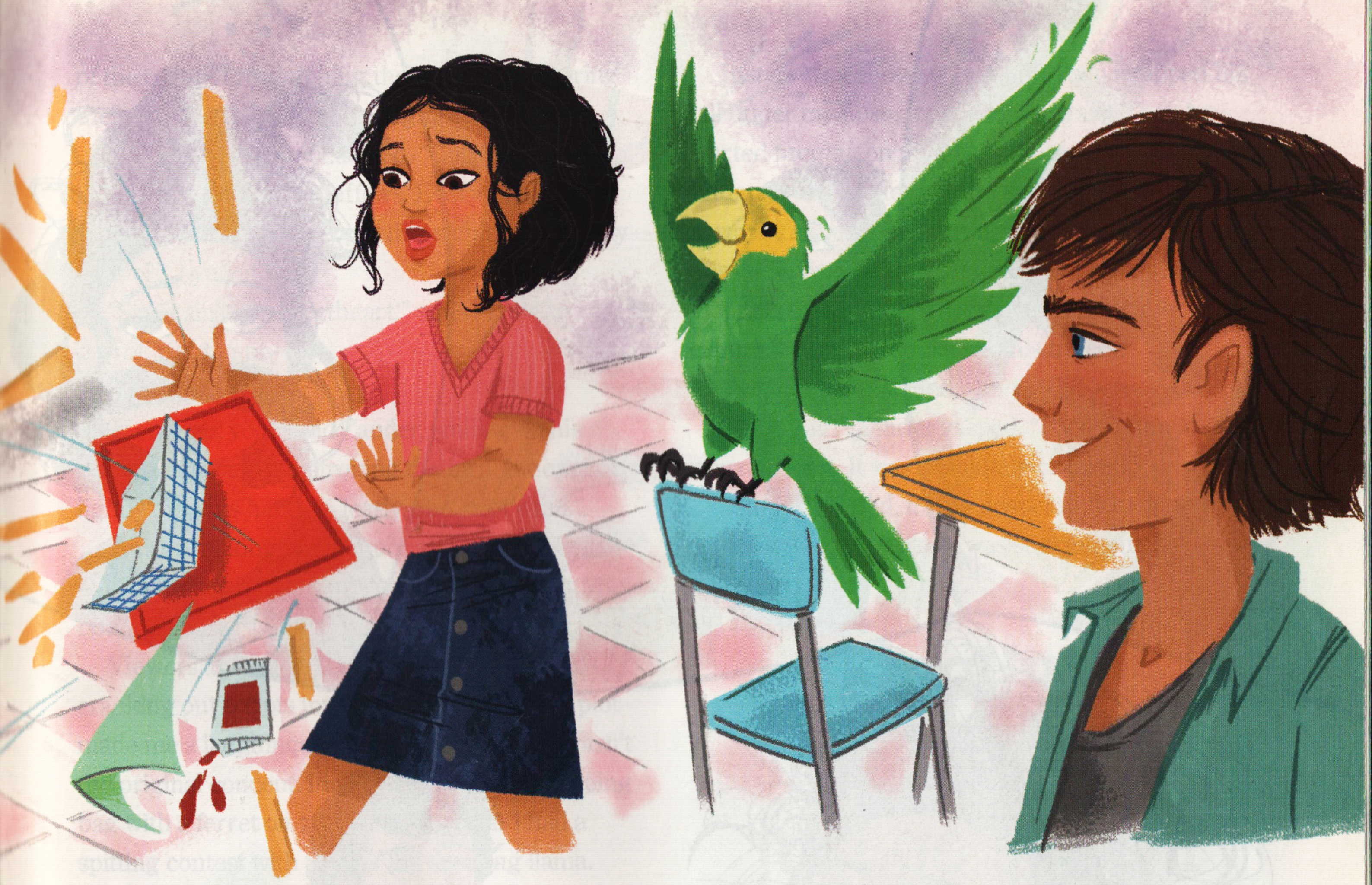
"What?" I wasn't sure whether he was kidding. "No. I just didn't want you to think I was a fan."

"Got it," he said. "Not a fan. That's unfortunate, as you've got to work with me."

"That's not what I meant . . . I just . . . um, never mind."

He had the bluest eyes I'd ever seen. Almost turquoise. Dimples, too. No wonder they chose him for Surfin' Jeans. I'd have to check out those ads on Mom's phone. Wait! What was I saying? I sounded like a fangirl. *Get it together, Izzy,* I told myself. *You're a serious actress. Try not to act like a total moron!*

But, as I soon learned, that was easier said than done on *That's Life!* Max surpassed his reputation for unpredictable twists. He was the original diva. He changed his mind a hundred times during every episode. If he saw something he liked, he went with it.

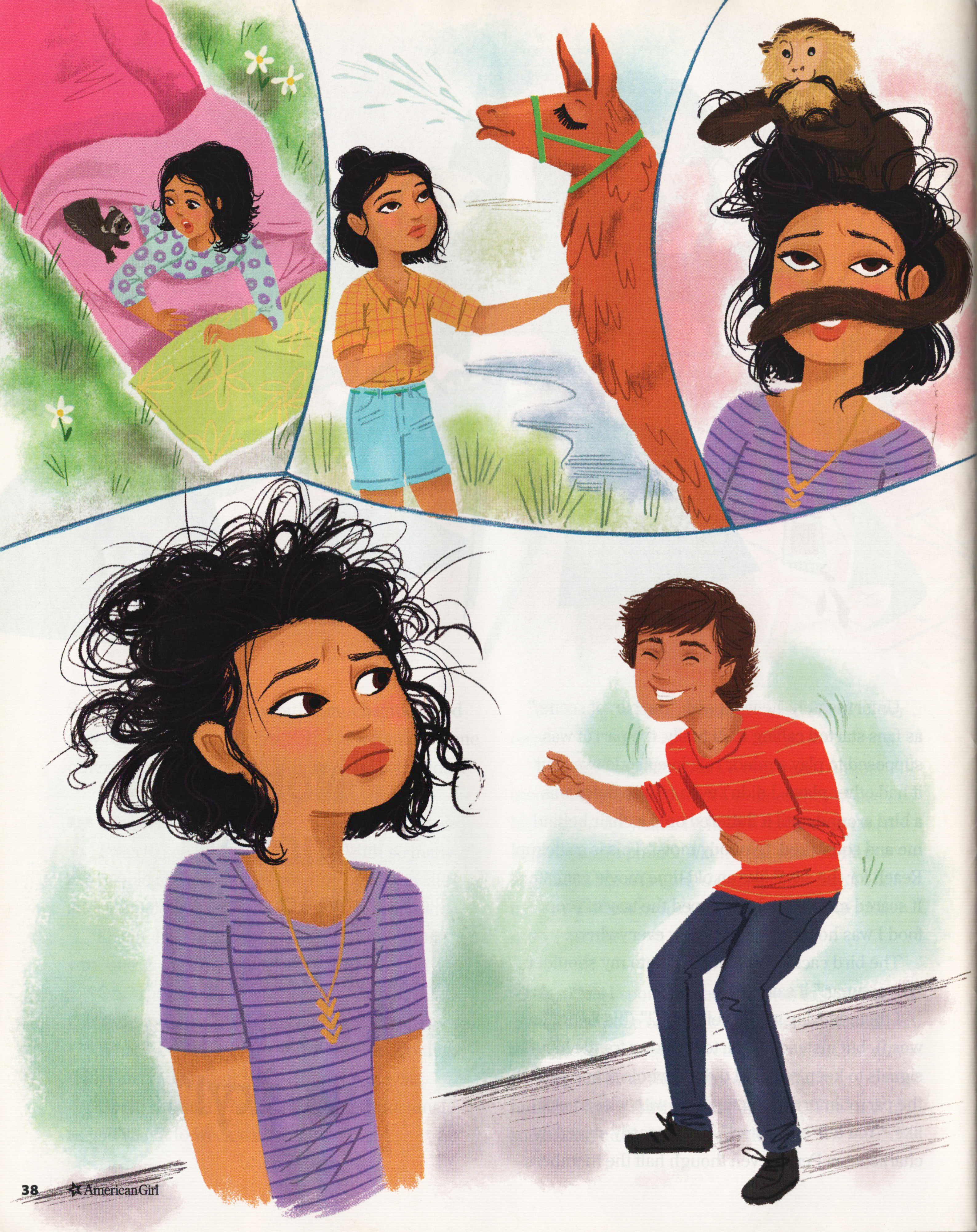


Unfortunately, he went with "the parrot scene," as fans started calling it. Actually, the parrot was supposed to play a minor role in episode two. But it had other plans. I didn't even realize there was a bird around until it fluttered onto a chair behind me and squawked, "Nobody move! This is a stickup! Reach for the sky!" like an old-time movie gangster. It scared me so much I dropped the tray of prop food I was holding and fries flew everywhere.

The bird cackled and hopped onto my shoulder. "Hiya, sugar!" it said.

I thought Max would yell "CUT!" (his favorite word), but instead he started making frantic hand signals to keep rolling. I did the whole scene with the parrot interrupting my lines with wisecracks like, "You tell 'em, sister!" Zander easily stayed in character as Perry, even though half the members

"Nobody move! This is a stickup! Reach for the sky!"



of the crew were clutching their sides or covering their mouths to keep from laughing.

When Max finally bellowed, "Cut! That's a wrap!" the room exploded in guffaws. Everyone laughed but me. "Can somebody get this stupid bird off my sleeve?!" I yelled.

"Say it ain't so, sweetheart!" squawked the parrot, right in my ear.

"Shut up!" I said.

"Come on, you," said Zander, smiling so his dimples showed and stroking the bird. It hopped lightly onto his hand. "Clearly, she's not a fan."

Was he making fun of me? I still couldn't tell.

I was ready with a sarcastic comeback, but Max bounded over. "LOVED it!" he beamed.

Viewers agreed, and soon the writers were cranking out scripts involving animals. Every plot made me a laughingstock, even though that wasn't the original concept. First I had to share a sleeping bag with a ferret on a sugar rush. Then I had a spitting contest with Shama the snorting llama.

Zander thoroughly enjoyed seeing me make a fool of myself. As soon as Max yelled "That's a wrap!" he'd burst out laughing and make some clever remark. Finally, I snapped. "Oh, just go surf in your jeans, poster boy!"

He looked surprised, but then he smiled. "It's much more fun watching you wrestle weasels."

The following week, the writers decided it would be hilarious to lock me in a tree house filled with monkeys. Nobody was going to take me seriously as an actress if this kept up!

"Isn't having a monkey on my head too much like having a parrot on my shoulder?" I asked Max. (Hint, hint.)

Max shrugged. "People love animals."

"Don't worry. Paco's really gentle," the trainer assured me, placing a capuchin on my head. "And he's potty-trained!"

Just as Max shouted "Action!" Paco wrapped his tail under my nose. It tickled like crazy. Then he started tugging on my head. What was he doing? Eating my hair? I fought the urge to sneeze. As always, Zander sailed through the scene without missing a line, but the second Max called out "That's a wrap!" he doubled over laughing while the capuchin scampered back to his trainer.

"What?!" I demanded.

"Your hair!" Zander gasped. "Paco . . . um . . . rearranged it. It was absolutely brilliant!"

"Stop it!" I cried, trying desperately to flatten my hair, which felt like it was sticking out in every direction.

Finally, I snapped. "Oh, just go surf in your jeans, poster boy!"

Zander looked up in surprise. "Why?"

"I'm sick of being laughed at!"

"But—"

"I might not stand around looking perfect in overpriced jeans all day, but I'm not a total moron! I do have feelings, you know!"

Zander's mouth fell open. He started to say something, but I didn't wait to hear it. I ran to the writers' room and burst into the middle of their meeting.

"Parrots?! Ferrets? Now monkeys?! What's the matter with you? I don't deserve this!" They just sat there open-mouthed like Zander while I ranted.

Then they gave me laryngitis. Literally. I had no lines in the next episode—just stage directions to pantomime everything . . . while wearing a boa constrictor as a belt.

Zander didn't laugh once on set, which I really appreciated, but for some reason that drove Max crazy. He said "CUT" more than ever. I wanted to thank Zander, but he left before I could catch him.

Max's spirits lifted after *That's Life!* was nominated for the super-popular Teen Fave Awards. But the nominations were for acting rather than writing, which made me brace for the worst. What would I have to do next? Wrestle an alligator? Fortunately, Max got a memo from management saying *That's Life!* was overspending on animal trainers.

Unable to use reptiles for revenge, the writing team took it out on me another way. They set the season finale at a school carnival. PJ and Perry were volunteers in a booth where people paid to throw pies in their faces. Naturally, every pie missed Perry and hit PJ.

"Don't worry. They're organic," the props people told me.

The other actors weren't supposed to throw the pies until I'd said my lines, but they kept getting the timing wrong. I suspected Max had told them to do it that way because he thought it was funnier. The set was hot, which made the whipped cream melt and slide down my back under my shirt. And I was swallowing so much of it that I was beginning to feel like a giant human cream puff. I pressed my lips together so I wouldn't gulp in anymore, but that just made whipped cream go up my nose!

What would I have to do next? Wrestle an alligator?

When Max finally screamed "CUT! And that's a wrap!" I barely heard him because my ears were so full of whipped cream. I bolted off the set and through the snack room, leaving a trail of white blobs behind me. Letting the exit door slam, I collapsed on the steps and dragged my sleeve across my sticky face.

I was snorting and spitting like Shama the llama when I heard someone clearing his throat behind me. I turned around and saw Zander holding out a towel. "I thought you might want this," he said. "Are you OK?"

Did he think I was pouting? "I'll be fine as soon as I get the whipped cream out of my nose," I replied irritably.

Zander's mouth twitched, but he forced the smile off his face. I felt the familiar flash of embarrassed anger, but then my shoulders sagged. What was the use?

"Go ahead," I shrugged. "Laugh. It's OK."

"That's what I've been trying to tell you," he said.

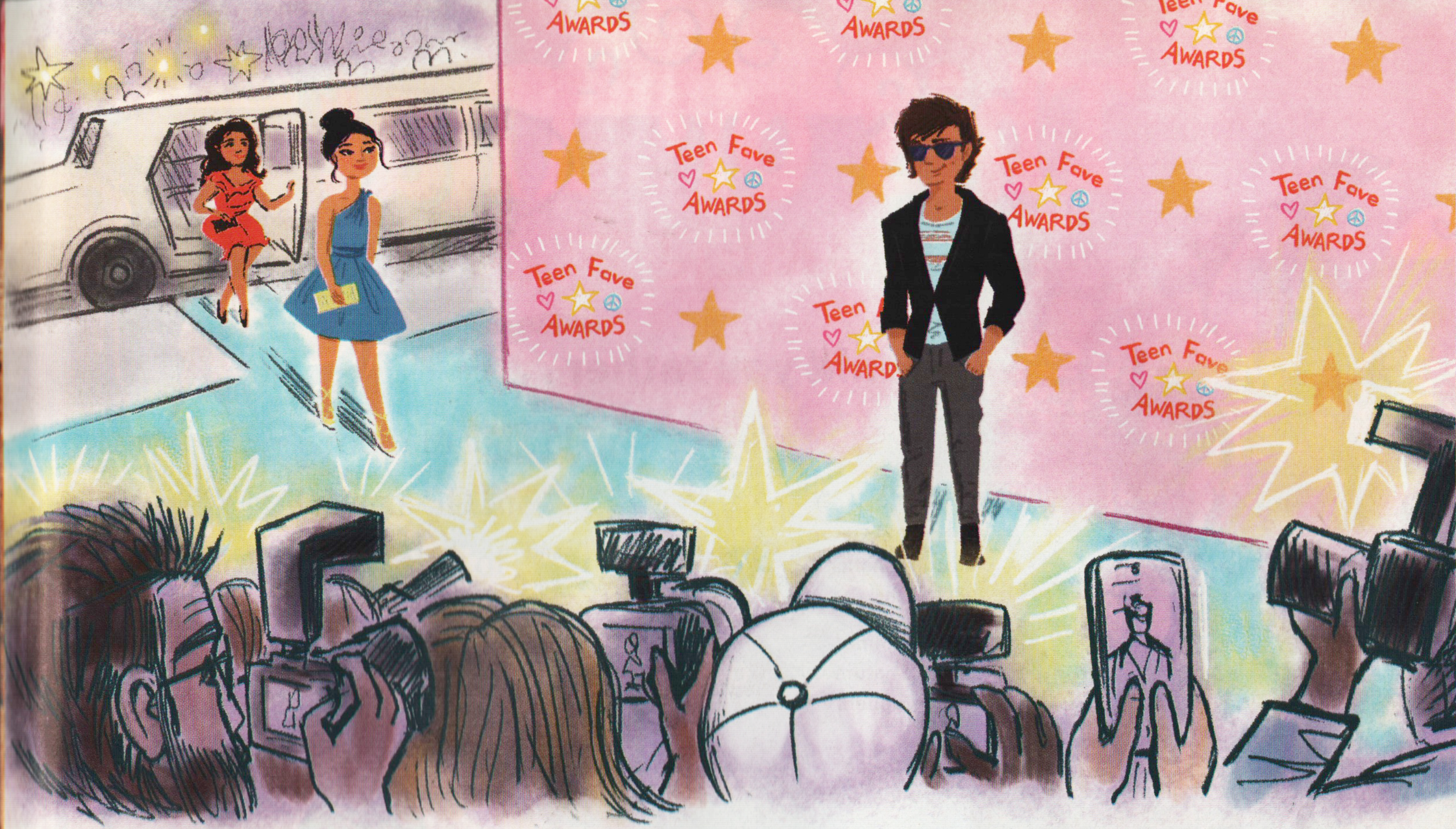
"What?"

He sat down next to me. "It's OK if people laugh. It's great, actually. I think it's amazing that you can be so funny."

"You do?" I asked, pulling a gob of whipped cream out of my ear and flicking it away. "You don't think I look ridiculous?"

"Of course you look ridiculous," he said. "That's the point. You're really good at comedy. I spent a year rolling around the beach in jeans looking ridiculous and nobody laughed once, because I don't have your talent."

"People love those ads," I told him.



He cringed. "I'm mortified every time I see one. You think it's bad having whipped cream in your nose? I had sand in mine for months. Besides, it's a bizarre name for a brand. You'd have to be daft to surf in jeans."

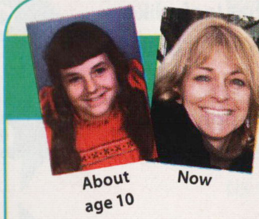
This time, I was the one who laughed.

After that, I decided Mom and I couldn't miss the Teen Fave Awards. Not after all the hard work we'd both done to get there.

Mom didn't even have to drive. Max sent a limo. After all, we deserved it. When we got to the red carpet, we saw Zander, surrounded by squealing autograph seekers. I guess it took a long time to sign them all, because he joined us at the cast table just as the presentation started.

Every time the host mentioned *That's Life!* the theme song came on along with clips of me on huge screens doing something that made me look ridiculous. Wearing a monkey mustache. Fighting a ferret for sleeping bag space. All over the ballroom, people were laughing. But that was OK. I laughed with them. Zander won the Sizzle Award for hottest young up-and-comer. I wasn't even nominated. It's hard to sizzle with a monkey on your head. But I did get a special Gut Buster award for comedy. Maybe right now, I'm not living my dream of becoming a *serious* actress, but, hey . . . that's life! ★

Meet the Author


About age 10

Now

Kathy Passero

I live in New York City with my husband and our 13-year-old daughter, Darby, an aspiring actress like Izzy. Though I've never had to wrestle a ferret, I do have to repeatedly remove my tabby cat from the laptop in order to get any writing done.

WORLD
Famous
LEMONADE

This or That

SUMMER FUN

Would you rather . . .

be able to speak to dolphins **OR** grow a mermaid tail whenever you're in water?

spend the day collecting sharks' teeth **OR** sand dollars?

go to a summer camp for nature photographers **OR** future veterinarians?

be able to see perfectly underwater **OR** never get a sunburn?

run a world-famous lemonade stand **OR** sing an ice cream jingle that will be played on TV?

go on a tour of the White House **OR** visit a sci-fi movie set?

spend the summer redecorating your room **OR** visiting faraway family?

go to a rainforest amusement park **OR** a restaurant in the Rocky Mountains?

buy a bedspread that looks like a coral reef **OR** wallpaper that looks like a real beach scene?

design a beach volleyball video game **OR** name a newly discovered star?

wear snorkel gear every day **OR** carry a surfboard everywhere you go?

see a baby kangaroo in Australia **OR** a baby sea otter in California?

Illustrations: Flávia Conley

HELP!

Dear *American Girl*,

I want my tiny room to look creative and cozy, but it is always SO messy. I can't keep it organized, and I'm sick of cleaning so much.

messy room

Having less stuff is the key to making a room look great. Pick a section of your room—say your desk or dresser—and go through everything you have there. If you love an item or use it regularly, keep it! Otherwise, make a pile of items to donate, and throw away the rest. In time, you'll have less mess, and staying organized will be much easier.

Dear *American Girl*,

I love to draw, but whenever I sit down to make a picture, I have no ideas! Help me!

artist

Inspiration is all around you. If you don't have anything in mind to draw, sketch your shoe. Or your hand. Or something on your bookshelf, or your pet, or a thing you see out your window. Or you can open any book and draw whatever you read about. The point is to just keep drawing. That way, when you finally know what you want to draw, you'll have had lots of great practice.

★

Dear *American Girl*,

My friend blamed me for something I didn't do. She won't talk to me. How do I get her back?

Miss my friend

Try talking to her again, or write a note. Try: "Our friendship is important to me, and fighting with you makes me feel awful. I'd like to talk about this with you. It would be sad for our friendship to end over a misunderstanding." A counselor at school also might be able to help. You can't force your friend to listen. But by reaching out, you'll show that you want to save the friendship.

★

Dear *American Girl*,

When I babysit my little sister, she throws humongous fits and is disrespectful. What can I do?

Sister on my nerves

Sometimes siblings act up when they feel that they're being bossed unfairly, so be sure to watch your tone with your sister and don't direct her any more than needed. If she does melt down, remain calm and stay nearby, but leave her alone to work it out. Babysitting can go more smoothly when everyone knows the plan, so ask to meet as a family before the adults go out.

★

Illustrations: Laura Cornell

MORE HELP!

Dear *American Girl,*

People always point to the big scars on my knee and ask, "What happened to you?!" I had surgery on my knee a few summers ago. But why do I have to tell people? And why do they think it's OK to ask me about it?

What should I say?

You never have to tell people anything personal, no matter how often they ask. But a good thing to try is giving the shortest answer possible, and then changing the subject. "Oh, I had surgery. What's for lunch today?" Or "Yeah, cool scar, huh? That's a cute shirt." Or shrug and say "Injury. No big deal." If you make it seem VERY boring, most people will move on.

★

Dear *American Girl,*

I'm the middle kid in a family of five kids. I know it's not true, but sometimes I feel that my parents don't care about me. Can you help me with my feelings?

Mad middle kid

Many kids find themselves feeling lost in the busy-ness of family life. But your parents definitely want you to feel as loved and valued as you are. Talk to them about your feelings. One-on-one time would be nice if it's possible, but you also could suggest a family game night or movie party. That might help your whole family to feel more connected—especially great if any of your siblings are feeling the same way as you are.

★

Dear *American Girl,*

A friend of mine *loves* to brag. Every time I talk, she has to interrupt with something way more cool than what I'm talking about. It hurts my feelings! What do I do?

HELP!

Sometimes people brag to make others feel bad, but more often they are trying to make themselves feel better. Try talking to your friend: "It makes me feel bad when you one-up me. If I'm sharing something good, can we please keep the focus on me for a sec?" You might need to bring this up more than once to help her break the habit. Remind her politely when she interrupts: "Please, can I finish?" If that doesn't work, you can ignore what she says when she interrupts and simply go back to what you were saying before she jumped in. When your friend has news and shares it in a way that's not one-upping you, act as excited for her as you expect in return—after all, friends are supposed to support each other!

★

even MORE HELP!

Dear *American Girl*,

I'm such a picky eater that whenever I go to a friend's house for dinner, I have to choose what we will have! I want to learn to eat more foods but am afraid.

Picky

It's great that you want to taste new foods—after all, good health starts with good nutrition. Try new things slowly. Pick a food that friends or people in your family seem to like, and try one bite. You might not like it at first! But this is cool: You can actually *teach* yourself to like new things if you keep trying over time. So stick with it. If you start feeling worried or stressed out about food, a doctor might be able to help.

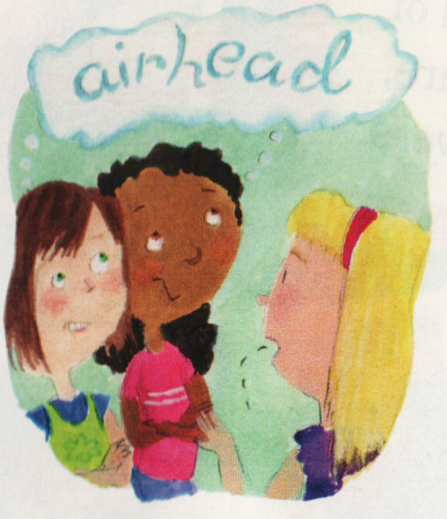
★

Dear *American Girl*,

Some people think I'm an airhead just because my hair is blonde. But it isn't true! How can I make them stop thinking that?

So-called airhead

Stereotypes are foolish. There's so much more to every person than just one quality. It's silly to assume that you can know everything about someone because of where they're from, or the grades they get, or their interests, or how they dress, or how they look. If anyone doubts your smarts based on your hair color (ridiculous!), remind yourself that they don't know you and are judging you based on nothing. People who believe stereotypes won't allow themselves the chance to get to know great people like you—and that's their loss.



★

Dear *American Girl*,

I want to find out more about my heritage and family history, but when I asked my mom if she had any records, she said no. What am I supposed to do now?

History and heritage

Start by talking to members of your extended family—a grandparent, aunt, or uncle might have information to share with you. Make time to interview grandparents and older relatives and find out all you can about their interesting stories and the lives they've lived. You can ask any of them to help you do some online research, too. Good luck!

★

Advice from You

"If you are texting with a friend and an argument or other drama is starting to happen, don't text back! Talking in person can help prevent fights."

Rachel S.
Age 13, Indiana

Need advice? Got advice? Write:

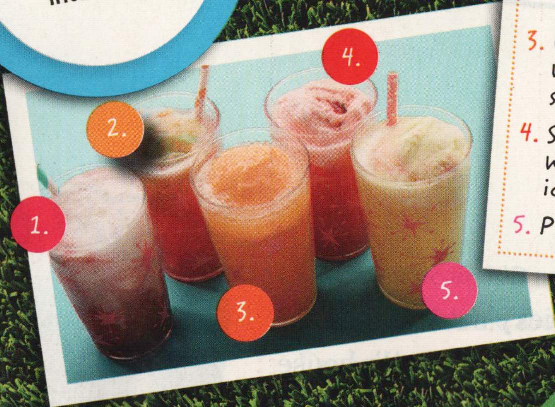
Help!
***American Girl* magazine**
8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562

We can't respond to all letters. But we read everything you send!

Behind the Scenes

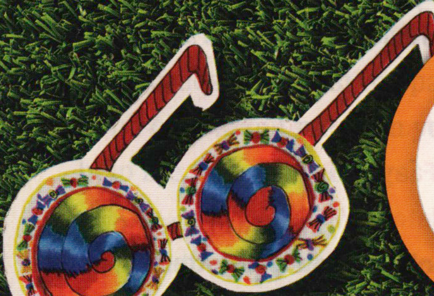
This issue was full of sunshine, adventure, and blooming flowers.

We made the sodas from "Soda Lab" (page 14) into floats!



1. Cherry vanilla with vanilla ice cream
2. Peach raspberry with rainbow sherbet
3. Orange mango with orange sherbet
4. Strawberry lime with strawberry ice cream
5. Pineapple

Check out these pics from our garden party photo shoot!



11-year-old Mia H. of Nebraska created a pair of sunglasses that are bursting with color!

This is how we created the set for our "Snappy Shades" feature. We used real sand!

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American Girl™

Illustrations: Carol Yoshizumi

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Super Star
Throw a party that's out of this world!

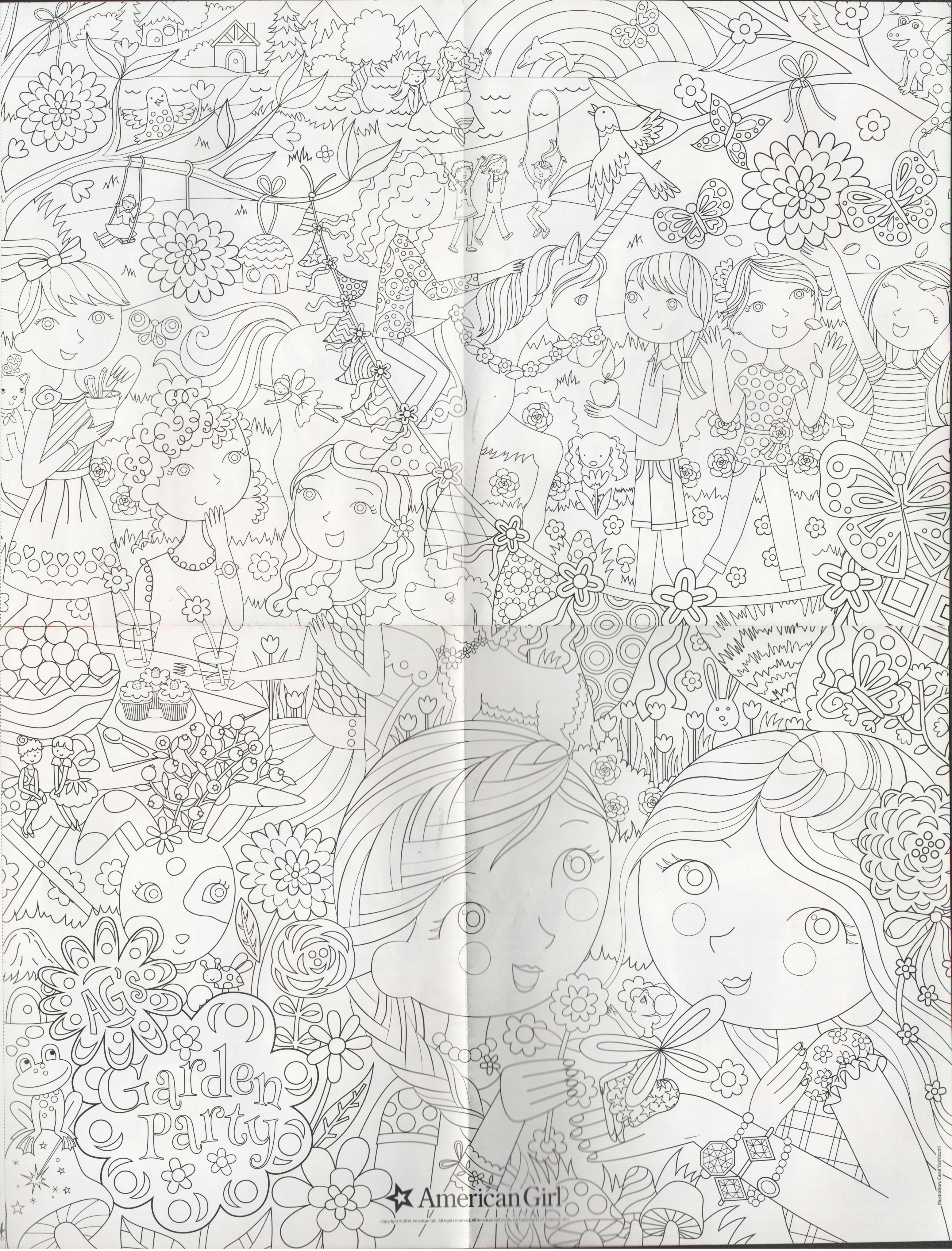
Breakfast Bites
Try a delicious breakfast snack.

Girl Power!
Which superhero are you?

Happy Halloween
You'll love these last-minute costume ideas.

For more fun and games, go to americangirl.com/playmagazine

Carefully cut out your poster along the dotted line, and then color it in.



American Girl

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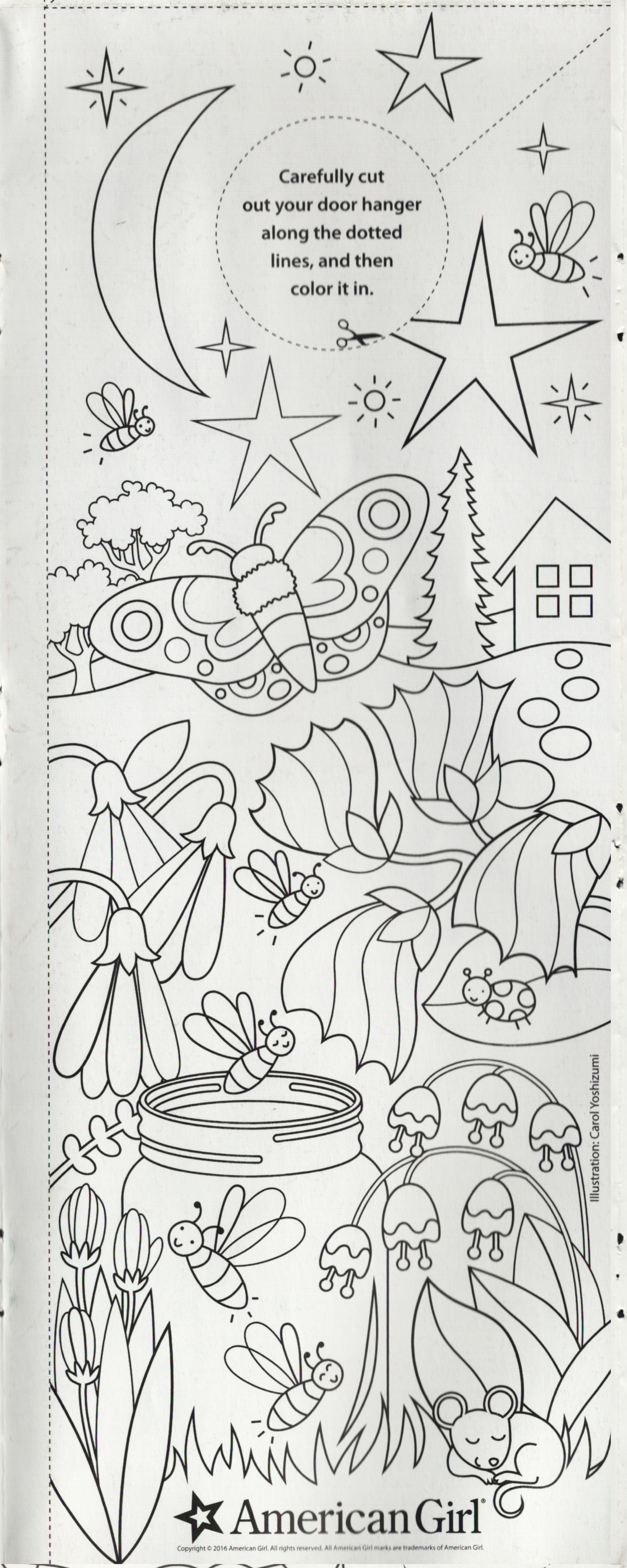
Illustration: Carol Yoshizumi

Flower
Power

Illustration: Alyssa Nassner



Carefully cut
out your door hanger
along the dotted
lines, and then
color it in.

Illustration: Carol Yoshizumi

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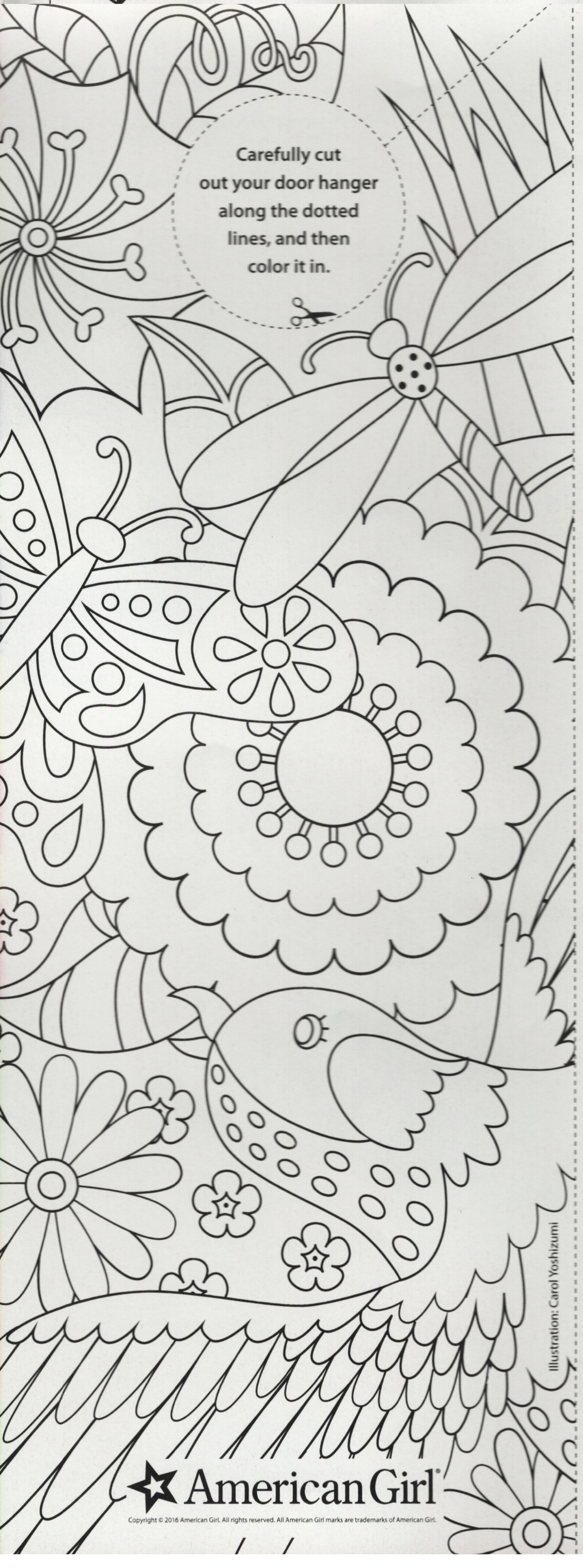

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